

Synopsis of a thesis presented for the M.A. Degree
by Dorothy Knight.

' J.J. Bodmer's contribution to the knowledge and appreciation
of Middle High German literature.'

J.J. Bodmer's approach to Middle High German literature was inevitably conditioned by the nature of the knowledge and appreciation of it shown by his predecessors. This is there^{fore} discussed briefly in the introduction.

A description of Bodmer's own early work follows, in which the influence of his personal character and surroundings, and of his development of new conceptions of the nature of poetry and societies and the relationship between them is analysed. Emphasis is laid here on Bodmer's acceptance of the idea of the intrinsic merit of primitive societies, and also of a more strictly historical view of social and literary development. The essay of 1743, in which Bodmer expressed the revolutionary opinion that Middle High German poetry has much in common with that of Homeric Greece, marks the culmination of his early work.

A survey of Bodmer's subsequent enquiries for Middle High German manuscripts illustrates the enduring quality of his enthusiasm for the subject, for the search for material went on throughout his life, even, as his unpublished papers show, when he was no longer immediately interested in the literary genres concerned, and when his editions of texts and articles

on the subject had apparently failed to arouse any general interest.

A general discussion of the relationship of Bodmer's Middle High German studies to his own literary work and to that of his contemporaries forms a necessary part of the survey of his discoveries. This matter is pursued further in a final analysis of Bodmer's approach to the material made available by his researches. Here it is sought to discover how far his knowledge and appreciation of Middle High German literature was determined by the ideas of his own time and how far, within that framework, he was able to produce reliable information about the period and about individual works.

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J.J.Bodmer's contribution to the knowledge and
appreciation of Middle High German literature.

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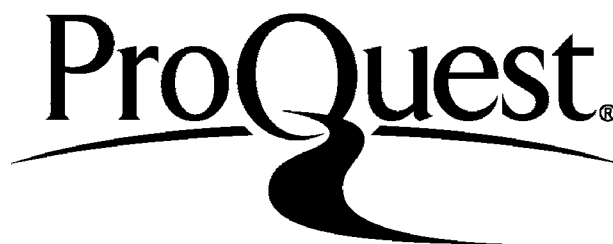
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The knowledge and appreciation of Middle High German poetry which reached about 1720, when Bodmer first embarked on his literary work, had been shaped by a series of influences which over a period of several hundred years had been building up. The two chief factors contributing to the preservation of this poetry had become apparent. There was, first, the fact that the poetry had been written in a form which was accessible to the general public, and secondly, the fact that it had been preserved in a form which was accessible to the general public.

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Since the first edition appeared closely as it was, and few changes were made afterwards, this is a reasonably faithful reproduction of the original. The text of certain epic poems survived at least until the fifteenth century. (1) The content of some of the poems also retained its popular appeal and there-

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Introduction

The knowledge and appreciation of Middle High German poetry which existed about 1720, when Bodmer first embarked on his literary work, had been shaped by a series of influences exercised over a period of several hundred years. By 1500, the two chief factors combining to preserve the memory of MHG poetry had become apparent. There was, on the one hand, a process of popular tradition, of more or less free adaptation of older poetic material to the requirements of a new public : and, on the other, a deliberate effort to preserve and study the literary monuments of the past in their original state.

The process of popular tradition took a variety of forms. A number of MHG epic poems, as for example, Hilhardt von Oberg's Tristant and Wernt von Gravenberg's Rigalois, were transformed into prose romances and later into chapbooks. Since the first adaptors adhered closely to the MHG text, and few changes were made afterwards, this development ensured that a reasonably faithful version of the content of certain epic poems survived at least until the late seventeenth century.⁽¹⁾ The content of some MHG didactic poems also retained its popular appeal and there-

(1) Cp. K. Goedeke, Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung, 2te Auflage, Dresden, 1884, I, III, pp. 340 sqq. The prose Tristant was printed for the first time in 1484, and was reprinted twelve times, the last being in 1664.

fore reappeared in new forms. In 1549, for example, a MHG version of Hugo von Trimberg's Der Renner was published. This too followed the MHG original closely and preserved Hugo von Trimberg's accounts of his own life and works and of MHG poetry in general. (1)

The MHG lyric underwent a twofold process of adaptation, merging into both the folksong and the Meistergesang. In the latter instance, the circumstances of tradition were rather different. The Meistersinger certainly kept parts of MHG poetry alive as poetry, but their preservation of them was a highly self-conscious act. One of the chief sources of their pride in their art lay in the knowledge of its ancient origin, and they tried as far as possible to preserve the link with the past. Their rules ensured that certain aspects of the form of MHG poetry, notably the tripartite structure of the strophe, were continued; and that every member was well versed in the story of the foundation of the order by the twelve ancient poets, among whom were Walther von der Vogelweide, Reinmar von Zweter, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Konrad von Würzburg and Marner. Their knowledge of the historical basis of the story of the foundation was clearly none too sound at first, for it was assumed that the twelve

(1) Der Renner, ein schoen und nützlich Buch etc., Frankfurt am Meyn, 1549. Hugo von Trimberg's account of himself appears on p.122, and that of MHG poetry on p.9. Sebastian Brant's adaptation of Freidank's Bescheidenheit also dates from this period : Der Freidank, Strassburg, 1508.

poets had lived in the tenth century. However, those who undertook to write histories of the order from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, ventured to make some corrections from chronicles and other sources which had since become available. In Cyriacus Spangenberg's Von der edlen und hochberühmten Kunst der Musica, written in 1598, extensive use was made of the account of the Wartburgkrieg given in the Thuringian Chronicle of the fifteenth-century historian Johannes Rothe. Spangenberg's work remained in manuscript until 1658, when an extract of it was printed in Haymann's edition of Opitz' Buch von der deutschen Poeterey.⁽¹⁾ Some forty years later his material was used again by J.C. Wagenseil for his Buch von der Meistersinger Holdsehniger Kunst Anfang, Fortübung, Nutzbarkeit und Lehrsätzen of 1697.⁽²⁾

Although the Meistersinger continued to practise their art in the seventeenth century and even later, they had by then lost their former prestige, and were indeed made an object of ridicule by other poets. This was partly because of their exclusiveness and conservatism; and partly because the taste in poetry of the class of skilled artisans, to

(1) Prosodia Germanica ... Verfertigt von Martin Opitzen. Jetzo aber noch von Enoch Haumann vermehret ... und mit schoenen Anmerkungen verbessert, Frankfurt am Main, 1658, pp.126 sqq. The complete work was not printed until 1861, when it was edited by A.von Keller, Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, LXII.

(2) This forms part of Wagenseil's Commentatio de civitate Noribergensi, Altdorf, 1697.

which they belonged in any case, no longer corresponded to the accepted literary standard. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the German reading matter of different sections of the community was much the same. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, a distinction began to be made between the new German poetry cultivated under Renaissance influence and works of older German origin. Thenceforth the literary-minded tended to read the former, while the general reader clung to the romances of chivalry and folksongs, which fell into the latter group.

The Meistersinger certainly made deliberate efforts to preserve a restricted body of knowledge of certain aspects of MHG poetry, but the chief movement for the preservation and study of the literary monuments of the past had its origins elsewhere.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, Tacitus' Annals and Germania were brought to light again, and study of them led German scholars to assume that the German past might provide for them an inspiration ^{akin} ~~alien~~ to that, which the Italian historians had found in ancient Rome. An indication of the enthusiasm with which they were fired and the methods they employed is given in a passage from Johannes Aventinus' Bavarian Chronicle, in which he says that he had :

"das ganze Beyerlandt durchritten / alle Stifft und Kloöster durchfahren / Buchkammern / Kästen fleissig durchsucht / allerlei Handschriften / alte Freiheit / Übergab / Brieff / Chronica / Ruff / Reimen / Sprüch / Lieder / Abenteuer / Gesäng durchlesen und abgeschrieben" (1)

(1) J. Aventini ... Chronica - Franckfort am Mayn, 1580, p. I

of Aventinus' preface.

Thus older poems gained a new significance as sources of information about national history, and as such they were collected. The Ambraser Heldenbuch, which was written for Kaiser Maximilian I, dates from this period.

Some of the poems which aroused interest at this time, were still sufficiently popular as literature to be printed. Parzival and Der jüngere Titurel appeared in 1477, but there was no subsequent edition.⁽¹⁾ The printed Heldenbuch, which was also published in 1477, fared better, for it was reprinted five times, the last being in 1590.⁽²⁾

Another poem which survived as a result of Humanist influence, and which was to be especially important to Bodmer, was Albrecht von Halberstadt's version of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Wichmann's adaptation of this was made, more for the sake of the translation of Ovid, than for the preservation of older German poetry. However, he was sufficiently interested, in the latter to keep Albrecht von Halberstadt's original preface, in which an account of his life and work at the court of Hermann von Thüringen is given.⁽³⁾

(1) No place of publication is given.

(2) Cp. Goedeke, Grundriss, ed.cit., p.274.

(3) P. Ovidii Nasonis deus allersinnreichsten Poeten Metamorphoses ... Etwan durch den wolgelerten M. Albrechten von Halberstadt verdeutsch. Jetzt erstlich gebessert und mit Figuren der Fabeln geziert, durch Georg Wichman zu Colmar, Meyntz, 1551.

Although these few poems retained their popularity, others were completely forgotten except as historical sources. Such was the case of the Hibelungenlied, which Wolfgang Lazius used in his De gentium aliquot migrationibus, referring to it simply as an ancient history of Theodoric.⁽¹⁾

During the Reformation and Counter Reformation periods, the original documents brought to light by the Humanists acquired a new significance as evidence to be used in political and religious controversy. When used in this way, they had to be studied with meticulous care, since an error in interpretation might well mean that a point had to be conceded to the other side. Such a close study in turn implied a need to learn more of the older language in which the documents were written. Therefore the linguistic studies, in which older historians had also indulged to some extent, likewise acquired a new importance.

Most of the literary documents discovered by lawyers and theologians at this time, belonged to the OHG period. However, at least one very important discovery of MEG poetry was made, when, towards the end of the sixteenth century Bartholomaeus Schobinger of St. Gallen came upon the Liederhandschrift C in the castle of Forsteck, where it had been

(1) Cp. W. Lazius, De gentium aliquot migrationibus, Basel, 1557, pp. 353, 686-82, 707, 757.

taken after the owner of the castle had borrowed it from the library of the Elector Palatine in Heidelberg. Together with his friend Melchior Goldast, a Swiss constitutional lawyer, Schobinger set to work to make a copy of the manuscript. Unfortunately they had got no further than the fifty-ninth poet, when the manuscript was recalled to Heidelberg.⁽¹⁾ However, Goldast kept the copy and made good use of it in order to throw light on the political and social history of the Middle Ages.⁽²⁾ In his Paraeneticus Veteres of 1604, he published the text of three didactic poems "Tyrol von Schotten", "Winsbeke" and "Winsbekin", accompanied by numerous historical and linguistic notes, which were frequently illustrated by quotations from other poems in the manuscript and from other MHG poems known to Goldast.⁽³⁾

Not long after the appearance of the Paraeneticus, interest in the literary monuments of the past began to spread to other circles. It had been the custom of some Italian literary critics of the Renaissance period to append to their handbooks on poetics brief outlines of the rise and progress of

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- (1) It was removed from Heidelberg soon after the defeat of the Elector by Tilly in 1620 at the battle of the White Mountain, and thereafter its fate is uncertain, until 1657, when it was listed in the catalogue of the Royal Library in Paris.
 - (2) When Goldast died in 1635, his copy was bequeathed to the city council of Bremen.
 - (3) Paraeneticorum Veterum pars I, Lindau, 1604. Among the other MHG poems known to Goldast was Wigalois, a MS of which he also bequeathed to the city of Bremen.

poetry, the chief aim of which was to show the ancient and honourable origins of the art. The German critics, who now arose to embrace the Renaissance ideal, sought to follow their example and introduced into their works remarks on older language and literature, which would serve to establish their great antiquity and thereby assist in enhancing the reputation of modern German poetry and language. Opitz' Aristarchus and Buch von der deutschen Poeterey both contained brief references to twelfth-century German poetry, which were illustrated by passages which Goldast had quoted from Marner and Walther von der Vogelweide; and in 1639 Opitz produced an edition of the Annolied.⁽¹⁾ About the mid-seventeenth century, his example was followed by a number of others. In 1663, J.G.Schottel illustrated his remarks on German orthography by quoting a passage of the Nibelungenlied, which had been used by the historian Laxius; and in 1654, Karl Ortlob made the first attempt at a connected account of the development of German poetry.⁽²⁾

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- (1) Aristarchus, sive de contemptu linguae Teutonicae, Bethania, /1618/ pp. C Ia sq.
Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey, Bresslau, 1624, Das IIII Capitel, "Von der Deutschen Poeterey.", p.18.
Incerti poetae rhythmus de sancto Annone, Danzig, 1639.
- (2) J.G.Schottel, Ausführliche Arbeit von der Teutschen Hauptsprache, Brunswick, 1663, p.196; K. Ortlob, De variis Germanae Poeseos Aetatibus Exercitatio. /Mittenberg 1654.

Ortlob adopted the division into periods of childhood, youth, maturity, old age and rejuvenation, which J.C. Scaliger had used.⁽¹⁾ According to him German poetry had reached its maturity during the Hohenstaufen era, beginning in the mid-twelfth century and ending with the interregnum in the thirteenth century. In this, as in every period, he described the kinds of poets and audiences to be found, the subject matter of poetry and its form. Ortlob's account was both clear and connected. A later attempt by D.G. Marhof in his Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache und Poeterey lacked these virtues, but contained considerably more information about individual works, and also introduced the subjects of folksong, Provençal and Scandinavian poetry. Hoffmann von Hoffmannswaldau also made a contribution in the historical introduction to his Teutsche Übersetzungen und Gedichte.⁽²⁾ Though this possessed few of the qualities of Ortlob's and Marhof's work, it contained a number of translations into modern German verse of lines of MHG poetry quoted by Goldast, which, so far as I know, were the first modern translations to be made.

(1) In his Poetices lib VII, Le^uyon, 1561.

(2) D.G. Marhof, Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache und Poesie, Kiel, 1684. Teil II.

(3) Published at Breslau, 1679.

Throughout the seventeenth century antiquarian scholars worked beside literary critics and poets, collecting documents and information as to their whereabouts. By 1700 a vast body of fact was available, but in a very unwieldy form. However, it was not long before attempts to introduce order were made. In 1703 the English scholar Hickes published the first OHG grammar⁽¹⁾, and in 1711 J.G. Eckhard surveyed the whole of previous research on older Germanic languages in his Historia Studii Etymologici Germanici⁽²⁾. These were followed in 1727-8 by J. Schilter's Thesaurus Antiquitatum Germanicarum, the work of a group of antiquarian scholars in Strassburg, in which the first considerable collection of MHG poetry was published.⁽³⁾ The second volume included Stricker's Karl der Grosse, part of the Rolandslied, and revised editions of the Annolied and the three didactic poems first published by Goldast, which were necessitated by the ^{rarity} ~~rarity~~ of Opitz and Goldast's editions;

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- (1) G. Hickes Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus, Oxford, 1703-05.
(2) Published at Hannover, 1711.
(3) J. Schilter, Thesaurus Antiquitatum Germanicarum Ecclesiasticarum, Civilium, Literarium, Ulm, 1727-8.

and the third volume contained Schilter's Old Alemannic glossary. The revision of Goldast's text was undertaken by Schilter's collaborator, J.G. Scherz, whose brother-in-law not only compared the text with the original in Paris, but also made a list of the contents of the Paris manuscript and a number of extracts from it.⁽¹⁾

In spite of this wealth of activity, knowledge of MHG poetry continued to be restricted to a small circle. The general reader might perhaps come upon one of the more palatable accounts of the subject given by Marhof or Hoffmannswaldau, but even if his interest were aroused, he could not indulge it further, except by venturing into erudite works, which were not in any case generally available. This difficulty was clearly appreciated by Gottsched, who realized that a study of the earlier stages of the development of language and literature might well be of use in his attempts to solve present problems. He therefore set to work to present the material necessary to such a study in a form readily accessible and attractive to the general reader. The result was the periodical, Beiträge zur kritischen Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit, the first number of which appeared in 1732.⁽²⁾ The aim was set forth in the preface :

(1) Cp. preface to vol III, "Catalogus A^utorum quorum poemata continentur codice MS. to 7266 to Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis".

(2) Published in Leipzig, 1732-41.

"Man wird hierinnen das allmähliche Wachsthum der deutschen Sprache, den Fleiss unserer Landesleute dieselbe zu bessern, die Vollkommenheit, so sie schon erlanget, die Fehler so einige von ihnen begangen und die Mittel selbige zu vermeiden, als in einem kurzen Begriffe beysammen antreffen. Zu dem Ende wird man nicht nur Auszüge aus alten und neuen Büchern machen, wie in andern Monatschriften gewöhnlich ist; sondern man wird selbige mit besondern Abhandlungen von allerley in die deutsche Litteratur, Critik, Dichtkunst und Beredsamkeit laufenden Materien vermischen."

In fact little was done to show the precise relevance of older language and literature to contemporary problems, nevertheless a considerable body of information about older poetry, covering nearly the whole of previous research on the subject, was put at the disposal of poets and the public. The Beiträge continued until 1741, and thereafter their task was fulfilled by the Neuer Büchersaal der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste (1745-51) and by a number of single works by Gottsched, appearing during the 1740ies and 50ies, to which reference will be made later. (1)

Thus interest in older literature on the lines advocated by Gottsched continued well into the second half of the eighteenth century. So also did the earlier antiquarian interest, as is shown, for example, by H. Pez' edition of

(1) Cp. infra. p. 42.

The growth of Bodmer's interest in Middle

Ottokar von Steiermark's rhyming chronicle of Austria in 1745.⁽²⁾ But within this older framework a revolution was being prepared. When the first of the Beiträge appeared in 1732, Bodmer had been at work for some twelve years, and though he had not as yet made any direct reference to MHG poetry, his thoughts were already developing along lines which were to produce a completely new attitude to older language and literature.

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- (1) Ottocarii Herneckii Chronicon Austriacum rhythmicum
 Edidit H. Pex, Ratisbar, 1745.

CHAPTER I

The growth of Bodmer's interest in Middle High German literature until 1734.⁴³

I.

In two brief autobiographical sketches written towards the end of his life, Bodmer tells of his earliest acquaintance with literature. (I) He describes himself as a shy and rather lonely child, whose lively curiosity about people and events found almost its only satisfaction in books. Those available to him were few, for his father's library consisted almost without exception of theological works, nevertheless he found some which made a deep impression on him. The Bible attracted him with the adventures of the prophets and patriarchs, and later he became intensely concerned with the fortunes of the characters in Buchholtz' moralizing novel Hercules und Valiska. (2) About that time a sixteenth-century version of a Middle High German poem first came to his knowledge, when his godmother gave him Wickram's adaptation of Albrecht von Halberstadt's Metamorphosen. The event is described in the "Persönliche Anekdoten":

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- (1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. Th. Vetter, Zürich, 1891. This comprises two sketches: "Persönliche Anekdoten" and "Mein poetisches Leben", which were written in 1777 and 1778. The references to Bodmer's early childhood are to be found on pp. 3 sqq. and p. 33.
- (2) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit., pp. 4 sqq. The full title of Buchholtz' novel is: Des Christlichen Teutschen Gross Fürsten Hercules und der Böhmischen Königl. Fräulein Valiska Wundergeschichte, Braunschweig, 1659.

"Dann zogen mich Ovidius Verwandlungen mit der ganzen Macht, so die Fabel auf die Unwissenheit hat, an sich. Da ich den Ekel gegen die veraltete Sprache in der Zeit nicht haben konnte, in welcher mir die Natur der neueren unbekannt war, drückten die Bilder sich mir mit voller Lebhaftigkeit ein!"(1).

Thus Bodmer's introduction to Middle High German literature was made by means of a work which had survived as popular reading matter, and the encounter took place at an age when he was able to accept it unreservedly as such. It was highly auspicious for his later work on mediaeval literature that this first contact was so essentially a 'live' one.

The very fact of the spontaneity of the contact must, however, deter one from assuming any specific attraction to Middle High German poetry on Bodmer's part at this stage. The story in question was not of mediaeval origin. Though the connection of this particular version of it with a thirteenth-century German poet was made clear in the preface, where Albrecht von Halberstadt's account of his life and work was preserved, it is doubtful whether this would have interested Bodmer as yet. Certainly his main concern with the book lay elsewhere. For him, as for the other readers whose interest had kept the poem alive so long, the attraction was in the story. He was drawn, not by any peculiarly mediaeval quality, but by a more universal one, which mediaeval poetry among others had achieved.

(1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten ed. cit., p.5.

A second encounter with a survival of mediaeval literature took place a little later, when Bodmer was at school in Zürich. This time he was introduced, not directly to a mediaeval German poem, but rather to the wider world of romantic chivalry as it was presented in the sixteenth-century German version of the Spanish story of Amadis de Gaule. Again the event is recorded in the "Persönliche Anekdoten":

"Ich segnete den Tag und die Stunde, in der ich in einem staubigen Winkel unter den verworfenen Skarteken meines Vaters den Theil des Amadiss von Frankreich entdeckte, welcher von Don Fulgoran, Dom Safiraman und Dom Herkules vom Gestirn und der Zauberin Dracotrophaae handelt. Ich schloss ihn zu meinen geheimsten Papieren mit der Angstlichkeit ein, mit welcher ein Harpax sein Gold bewahrt."

As before, the chief attraction lay in the story, but in this instance, Bodmer could discover more of the character of mediaeval poetry than he could learn from the Metamorphosen. The picture of the world of romantic chivalry presented to him by Amadiss von Frankreich was certainly a particularly extravagant one, but perhaps for that very reason it was liable to make a deep impression on his mind.

It was natural enough that a child should have been thrilled by wonderful adventures, and one would hardly be

(I) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit., p.7. The book to which he refers is Das Trey und zwenzigste Buch der Historien vom Amadiss aus Frankreich, Frankfurt, 1594.

surprised if the taste for them had been put away with childish things. It seems, however, that in Bodmer's case, the romantic tendency of childhood went deeper, that it was an early sign of a characteristic disposition. He was, in fact, to remain throughout his life, markedly curious about and receptive to all manifestations of human activity. During the early years at Greifensee, when his shyness and seclusion debarred him from much social intercourse, he turned for satisfaction to the tales of adventure which came to hand. In time new outlets presented themselves. At school he read Ovid in the original and the Aeneid and the Odyssey. It was no far cry from marvellous fiction to equally wonderful fact. Greek and Roman history were found to contain many good stories, and Bodmer's attention was caught also by some of the travellers' tales which had become so popular in the seventeenth century⁽¹⁾.

In this way his mind became stocked very early with a series of deep and lively impressions of many, and particularly of the stranger, aspects of life and literature. It was inevitable that as his experience increased, and as he came more directly under the influence of the ideas of his own time, many of the impressions gathered in childhood, including his childish allegiance to the more extravagant aspects of mediaeval romance, should be modified. Yet the impression of his

(1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit., pp.7sq. and 33.

early reading seems to have gone too deep ever to be effaced entirely, and, moreover, the peculiar qualities of Bodmer's mind, its curiosity and receptivity continued to work by divers means to prepare what was eventually a far surer basis for the appreciation of Middle High German poetry.

The intellectual prospect in Zürich during the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, when Bodmer was a schoolboy and later a student at the Carolinum, was bleak. A narrow, intolerant régime had put an effective brake on the spirit of enquiry in the town, and as yet stimulus from external sources was negligible. An impression of the period is given in 'Mein poetisches Leben':

"Leibniz und Wolf waren nicht bis diesseits des Rhenes gekommen, und Scheuchzer durfte die Bewegung der Erde nicht öffentlich behaupten. In Zürich war Gotthard Heidegger lang der einzige schöne Geist gewesen und schon dahingegangen. Die deutsche Sprache war verachtet und verdiente die Verachtung durch die Leerheit Hunolds und Neumeisters, durch den Bombast in Lohensteins und Postels Poesie. Die französische Sprache und noch mehr die Classiker der Franzosen waren noch Seltenheiten." (1)

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- (1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed.cit., p.35. J.J. Scheuchzer, Professor of Mathematics at the Carolinum from 1713 to 1733, was among the most advanced scientific and political thinkers of the time. Gotthard Heidegger (1666-1711) was a theologian and literary satirist well versed in modern European literature and criticism. His most famous work is the Mythosopia réomantica, oder Discours von den sobenannten Romans, Zürich, 1698, in which he attacked the seventeenth century novel on both moral and aesthetic grounds, displaying a thorough knowledge of the historical and critical background of the subject. He was a favourite of Bodmer, who later edited a number of his essays in Gotthard Heideggers Kleinere deutschen Schriften, Zürich 1732.

Thus enquiry into the nature of natural and social phenomena was almost unknown, and in any case discouraged; the modern French and German languages and literatures were likewise little known, and in the case of German literature, what was known was despised. This was a dismal beginning in those fields of activity where one looks for tendencies favourable to the growth of interest in older societies and literatures.

However, the situation did not entirely lack redeeming features. While still at the Carolinum, Bodmer read Bayle's Dictionnaire Historique et Critique and some passages from St. Evremond, which showed him something of modern methods of thought⁽¹⁾. He also made the acquaintance of Opitz, and for the first time the German language and German poetry revealed themselves to him as capable of attaining excellence.

"Ich erkannte die deutsche Sprache für eine Sprache, als ich in Opitz gesunden Verstand und Sitten der Menschen in poetischen Bildern vorgestellt fand. Ich wandelte mit ihm in dem classischen Boden, der mir so bekannt war". (2)

When Bodmer left the Carolinum, he was still undecided as to a suitable career. His father had wished him to enter the church, but when he showed no inclination for this, made arrangements for him to spend a year in Geneva and Lugano,

(1) Cp. Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit. pp.10 and 35.

(2) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit. p.35.

assisting his uncle, who was a silk merchant. Bodmer showed no more enthusiasm for business than for the church, but at least his travels cleared his mind as to where his true interests lay. He was attracted not by things, nor by abstractions, but by human activity. Everywhere he went he concentrated his attention on the human aspect of the scenes which presented themselves.

"Eine Reise, die man mich bloss um der Mode willen nach Genua tun liess, gab dem unerfahrenen Jüngling nur Paläste statt Menschen, nur die See statt Schiffe zu sehen." (1)

Again, as in his childhood, he was to find in literature what experience had failed to provide. In Montaigne's essays and in a copy of the French edition of the Spectator which he brought back from his travels, he discovered the stimulus he required. These gave abundant material for the study of every aspect of human life.

"In demselben [the Spectator] und in Montaignes Essais

(1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit. p. 12.

sandte ich meine ersten Blicke in das menschliche Herz." (1)

The effects of this now fully conscious preoccupation with the affairs of men in society soon became apparent. In 1719 Bodmer decided to test his aptitude for historical studies, and undertook voluntary work in the Staatskanzlei in Zuerich, thinking that he might later apply for the post of lecturer in history at the Carolinum, which would shortly fall vacant. He found that history as it had been written by the early Swiss chroniclers possessed none of the qualities he required of it. In a letter to Breitinger of 11 July 1720, he wrote,

"Unsere Historienschreiber sind unter die einfältigste Art zu zählen, welche nichts Eigens in ihre Historien einzumischen, von welcher mich nichts prätendirt wird, als die

(1) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed. cit., p. 12.

In the Persönliche Anekdoten Bodmer gives no details of the edition of the Spectator which he had obtained. There is, however, an illuminating reference in a letter addressed by the "Gesellschaft der Mahler" to Steele, dated 18 Oct. 1721, which is printed in the Chronik der Gesellschaft der Mahler, ed. Th. Vetter, Frauenfeld, 1887, p. 14. "Et nous présumons à l'heure qu'il est, d'être entre les meilleurs lecteurs de vos Discours. Cela ne s'entend pourtant que de ceux-là, qui ont été traduits jusqu'ici en François à Amsterdam chez les Wettsteins, et mis dans les quatres premiers tomes étant privez de l'original Anglois." This must have been an earlier edition of the work to which Hans Bodmer refers in Die Anfänge des zürcherischen Milton, Hamburg und Leipzig, 1893, p. 18. Le Spectateur ou le Socrate Moderne, ou l'on voit un Portrait naïf des Moeurs de ce Siècle. Traduit de l'Anglois A Amsterdam, chez les Frères Wetstein 1722, Quatrieme édition.

Sorgfalt und der Fleiss, zusammenzulesen, was zu ihrer Wissenschaft gelangt, und alles getreulich, ohne Gefährde und unerlesen zu registriren." (1)

They told him none of the things he was interested to find out. Where he looked for descriptions of the characters of individuals and societies, he found nothing but lists of events.

It seems highly probable that Bodmer was influenced in the formation of his views on history by a knowledge of the work of St. Evremond and of J.J. Scheuchzer.

There is a close resemblance between the opinions expressed in Bodmer's letter to Breitinger and those set forth by St. Evremond in the Discours sur les historiens François (2). In both instances, older historians are charged with lack of interest in individual character, and indifference to details of social organization. In view of this similarity, it seems likely that the Discours was among the works of St. Evremond which Bodmer had read while still at the Carolinum, and that he was directly influenced by it (3).

(1) L. Meister, "Bodmer", Schweizerisches Museum, Vol I, (Zürich, 1783), p. 131.

(2) Discours sur les historiens François (1665). Reprinted in Oeuvres choisies de Saint Evremond, ed. A.Ch. Gidel, Paris, 1886, pp. 277 sqq.

(3) Cp. *infra* p. 6
The first direct reference to St. Evremond's essay did not appear until 1727 in Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft, Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1727, p. 190.

The influence of Scheuchzer was of a different order. He too encouraged a more lively approach to history, but his efforts were concentrated on its local, Swiss aspect. During his journeys about the country in search of material for his Beschreibung der Naturgeschichten des Schweizerlandes⁽¹⁾, he made a collection of historical documents running into some seventy volumes, which he hoped to be able to use in compiling a Swiss history. The risk of difficulties with the censors caused him to abandon the project. Nevertheless an opportunity did arise for him to make practical use of the material he had collected, when in 1713, he conducted the case for the reform of political rights on behalf of the citizens of Zürich, and won them their dues in accordance with their ancient charters.

Bodmer's acquaintance with the works of St. Evremond, as with those of Montaigne and Addison, gave him a view of the main stream of European thought. The encounter with Scheuchzer, however, served to direct his mind to the immediate problems of contemporary Swiss society. Those problems had already aroused some attention, not only from Scheuchzer, but also from his predecessors, a small band of social and political reformers, who had been at work since the middle of the seventeenth century⁽²⁾. Chief among these were the anonymous

(1) J.J. Scheuchzer, Beschreibung der Naturgeschichten des Schweizerlandes, Zürich, 1706-1708.

(2) An account of their work is given in C. Morel's Die Helvetische Gesellschaft, Winterthur, 1863.

author of Heutefia, a satiric description of Swiss manners, and Johannes Grob, whose Treugemeinter Eidgenössischer Aufwecker was a warning to the Swiss against yielding too far to the encroachments of the French⁽¹⁾. Grob's work is of particular interest in the present instance because of the way in which he supported his appeal with references to the sturdy independence of the ancient Swiss.

"Es ist weltkündig was unsere Voreltern die alten Schweitzer für gottsförchtige, vergnügliche, redliche und hertzhaffte Männer gewesen, wollen wir die Freyheit, sie sie uns mit dapfferer Faust erworben behalten, und derselben länger geniessen, so müssen wir ihnen in allen jetzt erzählten Tugenden gleich werden."⁽²⁾

The patriotic enthusiasm kindled by contact with this movement was a decisive factor in focussing the energies of Bodmer and his friends, in inspiring them to make a practical contribution to the cause of social reform. That contribution took the shape of the periodical the Discourse der Mahlern, which was modelled closely on the English Spectator⁽³⁾.

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- (1) Heutefia, das ist: Beschreibung einer Reis. so zween Exulanten durch Heutetiam gethan.....1658.

Treugemeinter Eidgenössischer Aufwecker durch E.W.v.F.1688
Johannes Grob was the pseudonym used by Ernst Warnmund von Freyenthal.

- (2) Treugemeinter Eidgenössischer Aufwecker, ed. cit., p. 22.

- (3) Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil, Zürich, 1721. Zweyter Theil, 1722. Dritter Theil, 1723. Die Mahler Oder Discourse von den Sitten der Menschen. Der vierdte und letzte Theil, Zürich, 1723.

Part I is reprinted: Die Discourse der Mahlern, ed. Theodor Vetter in the series Bibliothek Älterer Schriftwerke der deutschen Schweiz, (2te Serie, 2tes Heft, Frauenfeld, 1891)

Here the task of reform was approached more generously than ever before, because the authors possessed a wider acquaintance with the more liberal aspects of contemporary thought than their predecessors had done.

The purpose of the authors of the Discourse was nothing short of a wholesale regeneration of Swiss manners and taste. Their method implied above all a lively recognition of the interdependence of all branches of human activity, and particularly of the connection between the life of a society and the literature it produces. They realized that the reform of literature could not take place in a vacuum, that the achievement of excellence by the writer alone, which had been the aim of most previous attempts, was not enough, that it must be matched by the ability of the public to appreciate that excellence⁽¹⁾. Therefore the public had to be educated to exercise a discerning judgement, both in regard to the content of literature, which according to the authors of the Discourse, included the whole of human experience, and also in regard to its technique, the way in which the impression of that content is conveyed to the reader. The "Mahler" accordingly set themselves to portray every aspect of human activity.

"Ihre Passionen, Capricen, Laster, Fehler, Tugenden,

(1) Cp. Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil. ed. Th. Vetter, p. 6.

Wissenschaften, Thorheiten, ihr Elend, ihre Glückseligkeit, ihr Leben, ihr Tod, ihre Relationen, die sie mit anderen Entibus haben, endlich alles was menschlich ist und den Menschen angeht." (1)

The way in which they presented this vast material to their readers was governed by two main considerations. They realized that, in order to form a right judgement of any aspect of human conduct, one must understand the fundamental principles involved in it. Therefore a number of essays were devoted to investigations on these lines. They were equally convinced that theory is not enough, that the most effective teaching is by example⁽²⁾. Therefore the more theoretical essays were supplemented by others, containing descriptions of particular phenomena, which would serve to illustrate general principles.

Among the particular aspects of human experience to be considered within the general scheme of the Discourse were some directly concerned with the growth of an appreciation of older literature, namely history, language and literature. The fact that here as so often in Bodmer's later work, they were considered together, linked by relation to a wider purpose, was a favourable augury for the growth of that appreciation.

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 1ster Theil, ed. cit., p.8.

(2) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 1ster Theil, ed. cit., pp. Breitinger's "Blosse Moral genügt nicht; Beyspiele; Satire".

The view of history expressed by Bodmer in the Discourse is influenced by two theories, which were to have a profound and permanent effect on his attitude to older societies and literatures. These were the theory of the influence of geographical and social environment on the formation of personal and national character, and that of the natural virtue of primitive societies.

In the essay "Geschichtschreibung" Bodmer developed further the ideas already expressed in his earlier letter to Breitinger⁽¹⁾. He was by now fully convinced of the didactic purpose of history, and held that this could not be achieved unless historians used their material in order to illuminate the processes of human conduct. Their main duty was to describe the characters of individuals and nations.

"Ich nenne Charakteren diese subtilen und ordentlichen Beschreibungen aller derjenigen Qualitaten, durch welche sich eine ganze Nation oder Person unterscheidet." (2)

A theory, such as that of the influence of environment, clearly provided a valuable aid to the fulfilment of this task. In employing it, Bodmer was not breaking entirely new ground. The effect on character of geographical environment in

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil, ed. cit., pp. Cp. infra p.

(2) Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil, ed. cit., p.26.

particular, was already well known in popular belief and in serious enquiry. The most important modern writer on the subject was the sixteenth-century French historian Jean Bodin⁽¹⁾. It is doubtful whether Bodmer knew Bodin's work at this time, but he certainly knew that of Pierre Charron, who probably drew on it in his book De la Sagesse⁽²⁾.

Though Bodmer did not as yet attempt any systematic development of the theory of environment, he clearly applied it to some extent in the brief sketch of Swiss national character, which he gave as an example to historians.

"Ein weiter Bezirk von den höchsten Bergen formirt und umschliesst ein enges Thal, welches mit steilen Felsen, wilden Waldströmen, grossen Seen, dunklen Hölen angefüllt ist, das fruchtbarste so hier anzutreffen sind die grassreiche Weidengänge, die es auf der Höhe der Alpen hat; das Volk, welches seine Hütten an dem Fuss derselben gepflanzt, lebet von der Milch, dem Käse und der Butter, so es von dem Viehe zeuhet, das seine Speise in dem Gebirge findet. Bey dieser Nahrung bekömmt es starke Knochen und undersetzte Gliedmassen, es gewöhnt seinen Leib in die Kälte und zu allen Fatiguen. Seine Worte sind grob aber wolgemeint; sein Gemüt ist ehrlich, ohne ungehaltene Begierde des Lobes; grossmütig ohne Pracht. Die Zärtlichkeit, die Üppigkeit sind ihm unbekannte Laster, es lebet ohne Gebrauch der kostbaren Metallen.... seine

(1) Cp. J. Bodin, De la République, Paris, 1576, Bk. V, Ch. I.

(2) Cp. P. Charron, De la Sagesse, Bordeaux, 1601, Tome I Ch. 38, p. 222. "Première distinction et différence des hommes naturelle et essentielle, tirée de la diverse assiette du monde."
Bodmer refers to Charron in an undated letter to Breitinger cp. Schweizerisches Museum, Zürich, 1783, p. 133.

Wissenschaft ist in den Trieb der Natur und die Satzungen der Vorfahren eingeschlossen."(1)

Besides serving as a model of historical method, this sketch also implied a new, scientific basis for the traditional view of early Swiss society, as it had been expressed by Johannes Grob, for example⁽²⁾. The naturally virtuous character of the simple alpine peasantry of Bodmer's own day, and that of the forefathers, whose ways they so anxiously preserved, clearly had a common origin in the unchanging external circumstances of their existence.

The "Mahler" gladly accepted the picture of primitive Swiss virtue, using it in the first instance as a moral object lesson. Breitinger began conventionally enough in his essay "Blosse Moral genügt nicht; Beyspiel; Satire."

"Wenn ich ein Beyspiel der Tugend und der Grossmüthigkeit in dem Unglück, von der Dapfferheit, von der Redlichkeit, von der Modestie, von der Vergnüglichkeit, etc., sehe, so treibet mich meine Ambition, durch eine rühmliche Nachfolge ihnen ihre Ehre disputirlich zu machen.....Wenn ich die Gemälde und Conterfaite meiner Vorfahren, kluger und berühmter Männer sehe, die sich um das Vatherland durch ihre grossmüthige Tapfferkeit verdient gemacht, und derselben Freyheit mit ihrem eigenen Blut erküffet haben.....so entglimmet in mir die Begierde und Liebe zur Tugend."(3)

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 1ster Theil, ed. cit., p. 29.

(2) Cp. *supra* p. II.

(3) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 1ster Theil, ed. cit., p.103sq.

Thus far admiration of simple communities had been based more on tradition and theory than on a knowledge of the facts. Soon, however, a decisive stimulus was given to enquiry into the circumstances of the natural life as it was actually lived by alpine peasants of the early eighteenth century.

The "Mahler" had early announced their intention of restricting their consideration to a small circle of cultured people, for at that time they saw little hope that their views would gain acceptance elsewhere. ⁽¹⁾ However, on 13th October 1721, Dr. Laurenz Zellweger in Trogen wrote, ^{to say that he had made the experiment} of reading the Discourse to country people in his neighbourhood, and had found them fully capable of appreciation, in fact more so than a better educated audience, for their minds were less cluttered ⁽²⁾ with prejudice. Zellweger's letter brought

(1) Cp. Die Discourse der Mahlern, Erster Theil, ed. cit. p.7

(2) Cp. Chronick der Gesellschaft der Mahlern (hereafter referred to as Chronick), ed. cit., p.31 sq. The letter was written some months after Breitingers essay, which had been returned by the censors in July 1721. cp. Chronick, ed. cit., p.8.

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an enthusiastic reply from Zürich, promising a restriction of the use of foreign words for the benefit of this public, and continuing:

"Die Bauern zum Exempel verdienen, dass man auch ihrer eine Rechnung trage, da sie fast die einzigen sind, denen die Natur ihre Reden anvertrauet hat; wir wollen sagen, weil sie von den Ceremonien und den Grimacen der Societät, welche man sonst Gesetze der Höflichkeit, der Galanterie, der Politesse etc. heisset, am allerwenigsten verderbt und angestecket sind." (1)

After this, enthusiasm for the study of ancient Swiss society and the survivals of it in the unspoiled mountain communities grew apace. Its quality is best revealed in a letter of 11 December 1721 addressed by the "Gesellschaft der Mahler" to Professor Lauffer in Bern:

"Endlich kommen wir auf einen Punkt, der uns sehr anliegt. Ihr wisset, dass wir in der Welt für Schweitzerische Zuschauer passiren sollen. Nun können wir diesen Titul nicht verdienen, als wenn wir in unserem Wercke die Sitten der Schweitzer, unserer Eydsgeossen, die sie heüt zu Tage regiren, also geschickt abschildern, dass die Aussländer und Nachkuder, die unser Werck lesen werden, ohne Mühe den Schweitzerischen caractère, wie er sich von den andern Nationen, und andern Zeiten unterscheidet, daraus erkennen. Es wäre nichts curieusers, als ein Schweitzerischer Zuschauer von derselben Zeit, da die Eydsgeossenschaft sich formirt. Welche wilde, aber natürliche Manieren! Welche Bauern, aber grossmüthige! Welche Ruhm ohne Pracht! Es hat ohne Zweifel noch Resten von diesem alten caractère in den Cantons von Uri, Unterwalden etc. . . . Es düncket uns, dass wir in einer glücklichen Situation stehen, wunderliche und seltene caractères und Manieren zu finden. Es giebet solche in unserm Lande ohne Zweifel.

(1) Chronick, ed. cit., p.36.

Man liebet die Reiss-Beschreibungen von den entferntesten Ländern, weil sie die fremdesten Sitten haben; Können wir in unserm Cantons nicht eben so fremde entdecken? Z.e. in den Moden zu caressiren; der Anferzeuhung; in dem gout wegen der Bücher; in den Ergötzlichkeiten - der Herrn, der Dames, der Bürger, der Bauern etc. Liebes-Intrigen, Exempel der Standhaftigkeit, Freymüthigkeit, natürliche Reden etc. Wir sind gesonnen, um diesen Zweck zu erhalten, in allen Cantons Correspondenzen aufzurichten, durch die wir die Nouvelles von ihren Sitten erkundigen, und uns das seltsamste, das sie haben bekandt machen." (1)

The familiar utilitarian interest in the definition of national character, and in the study of the praiseworthy state of primitive Swiss society, is here supplemented by a new factor. This is the emphasis on sheer pleasure in discovery about distant places and times. Its influence is noticeable in the tone of the whole letter, but it is particularly marked in the latter part where reference is made to travellers' tales. These, like early Swiss history, were already known as a source of edifying information about what Shaftesbury had termed,

"that simplicity of Manners which has often been known among mere (2) Savages; ere they were (2)

(1) Chronick, ed. cit., p.36.

(2) Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times (1711), ed. G.M. Robertson, London, 1900. p.352.

corrupted by our Commerce."

Bodmer's own reading of travellers' tales, and his acquaintance with the works of Montaigne and Steele gave him ample opportunity to study this aspect of them, and he does in fact mention it here speaking of,

"Exempel der Standhaftigkeit, Freymüthigkeit, natürliche Reden etc. ." (1)

However, the search for examples of these virtues takes only second place. First comes sheer curiosity about strange lands and people:

"Man liebet die Reiss-Beschreibungen von den entferntesten Ländern, weil sie die fremdesten Sitten haben; Können wir in unsern Cantons nicht eben so fremde entdecken?"

"Es düncket uns, dass wir in einer glücklichen Situation stehen, wunderliche und seltene caractères und Manieren zu finden ."

Here one recognises the influence of that characteristic turn of mind, which had shaped Bodmer's

(1) Cp. *supra* p. 19.

Bodmer may well have known Montaigne's essay "Des Cannibales", in which a traveller's account of a primitive tribe is examined. There the word "savage" is employed as a term of praise. cp. Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. M. Rat, Paris, 1941. livre 1, ch. XXXI p. 234. "Ils sont sauvages, de mesure que nous appellâmes sauvages les fruits que nature, de soy. . . a produits. . . En ceux la sont vives et vigoureuses les vraies et plus utiles et naturelles vertus et proprietez. ."

A further example of this idea was to be found in the *Spectator*, No. 11 in Steele's version of the story of "Lukle and Yarico", which was taken from Richard Ligon's True and exact account of the island of Barbados (1657). This story certainly impressed Bodmer for he later produced his own version of it in hexameters, lukel und Yariko, in 1756.

early taste in literature. The strong recurrence of his early curiosity at this time augured well for the subsequent development of his attitude to the past, for it ensured that his general theories of the nature of historical development would be supplemented by curiosity about historical detail.

The plan to give an account of Swiss manners was not immediately successful. A number of letters similar to that addressed to Lauffer, and an essay in the Discourse failed to arouse enthusiasm on the part of the members, and there was also some risk of difficulties with the censors. ⁽¹⁾ This did not induce Bodmer to abandon his project, but his hopes of its fulfilment were postponed.

Meanwhile the study of other aspects of human activity claimed his attention. Here one sees how the ideas which had shaped his view of social development as a whole, also to some extent affected his attitude to its individual parts. In his

(1) Cp. Chronicle, ed. cit., p.p. 48 and 65; Die Discourse der Mahlern, 3ter Theil, Zürich, 1723. 12 Discours, "Plan zu einer Schilderung schweizerischer Sitten"; also Chronicle, ed. cit. p. 58. (letter to Lauffer of 20 June 1722.)

discussion of language, for example, the influence of his conception of the way in which character is formed, is clearly apparent. In the essay "Die Rede" he stressed the fact, that language is man-made, in response to fundamental human needs, and that it must therefore reflect the characteristics of its creators. Thus he attributed a peculiar quality to each national language:

"Eine jede Sprache hat ihren gewissen Genie, welches sich in Regeln zeuhen lässt." (1)

He did not as yet draw the further inference, that a naturally virtuous society would produce a language to match. However, certain remarks in the letters to Zellweger and Lauffer suggest that the idea may already have occurred to him.

"Die Bauern zum Exempel verdienen, dass man auch ihrer eine Rechnung trage, da sie fast die einzigen sind, denen die Natur ihre Reden anvertraut hat."

"Exempel der Standhaftigkeit, Freymüthigkeit, natürliche Reden etc." (2)

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- (1) Die Discourse der Mahlern , 1ster Theil, ed.cit.
p.32.
(2) Cp. supra pp. 18 and 19.

The Discourse also contained two essays on
 (1) poetry. In these Bodmer set himself to discover^s
 the natural scope and method of the poetic art,
 which had been so completely obscured by the extra-
 vagances of content and form of late seventeenth-
 century poets. Following the lead given by Addison
 in the Spectator he defined the subject matter of
 poetry as nature, the natural world in all its
 (2) aspects. He found that the poet's taste^k was to
 reproduce that world as faithfully as possible,
 since the chief source of aesthetic pleasure was
 the recognition of the likeness between the origin-
 al and the artistic imitation. The poet's power
 to reproduce nature, and that of the reader to ab-
 sorb the impression of that reproduction, was shown
 to depend on a special faculty of the mind, the
 imagination. This alone could lend permanence to
 otherwise fleeting sense impressions, and enable them
 to be conjured up at will. Bodmer realized, more-
 over, that the intellectual process of imagination
 could be stimulated by combination with some powerful
 emotion, for this would cause the attention to be

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern, later Theil, ed. cit.
 pp. 91 sqq. "Imagination"; pp. 97 sqq. "Dicht-
 kunst, Malerei, Bildhauerkunst."

(2) Cp. Spectator, Nos. 411-421. "On the Pleasures of
 the Imagination."

concentrated so completely upon the subject concerned, that one's description of it could not fail to be effortlessly natural:

" Wenn auf diese Weise die Imagination von den Passionen begleitet wird, als dann ist sie im Stande sich ohne Distraction über ein Objecte aufzuhalten, und sich die Natur, Gestalt und Grösse desselben behandt zu machen. . Ihr werdet allezeit einen Affekt natürlicher ausdrücken, den ihr in dem Hertzen fühlet als einen, den ihr nur simulieret." (1)

In 1721 Bodmer gave little more than a broad statement of principle. During the next five years however, he examined the implications of his poetic theory in more detail. One result of his investigations was the essay Von dem Einfluss and Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft, of 1727, in which he discussed the various means by which the imagination (2) could be helped to produce lifelike descriptions. In the course of his discussion the question arose, as to how accurate portrayals of subjects far distant in space and time were to be achieved. Now Bodmer realized, that the theory of the influence of environment on character, which he had already

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil, ed. cit. p.93.

(2) Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft; zur Ausbesserung des Geschmacks: Oder Genaue Untersuchung aller Arten Beschreibungen etc. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1727.

developed in relation to history, was also relevant to his poetic theory. He therefore suggested that poets might well study the principles underlying human behaviour on these lines, and by keeping their descriptions in accordance with them, ensure a reasonable degree of accuracy.

The guidance on this point, which was now given to poets was somewhat more explicit than that historians had received, for Bodmer's conception of the theory of environment had developed since the Discourse. There he had restricted his consideration almost entirely to geographical influences. Now, however, the two new factors of government and education were included:

"Eine andere (Ursache) findet sich in der Art der Regierung /welche in einem Lande eingeführt ist/ sintemahlen die Freyheit eines gantzen Volkes im bürgerlichen und geistlichen nach der Regiments-Verfassung eingeschräncket ist. Die dritte Ursache der Ungleichheit zwischen einer Nation und der andern/ muss man in der gewöhnlichen Manier der Auferzeuhung suchen/ welche stets in einem lande überhaupt hin die gleiche ist/ und dem gantzen Menschen gleichsam seine besondere Gestalt giebet."(1)

(1) Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft
pp. 169 sq.

The development of Bodmer's views since the Discourse was probably caused by acquaintance with works such as B. L. de Muratte', Lettres sur les Anglois et les François et sur les Voiages, Zürich, 1725, and John Locke's Some Thoughts concerning Education, London, 1693, which he mentions on pp. 170 sqq. of Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft.

The problem of ensuring historically exact descriptions was thus satisfactorily overcome.

- However, the development of Bodmer's poetic theory raised other difficulties which could not be settled by such purely intellectual means. He had also stressed the need to combine imagination with emotion in order to produce a spontaneously faithful picture of a situation or emotion, but he was hard put to it to find examples in modern German poetry to illustrate his point. Some passages from poems by Canitz and Besser were all he could offer in the Discourse ⁽¹⁾ It had obviously not yet occurred to him, that the simple and spontaneous character, which he had found to exist in primitive communities, might be reflected in their poetry, which would, in that case, provide the very illustration he sought.

However, others had already reached a similar conclusion. In Montaigne's essay "Des Cannibales" primitive poetry received high praise:

"Or j'ay assey de commerce avec la poésie pour juger ceci, que non seulement il n'y a rien de barbare en cette imagination mais qu'elle est tout à fait anacréontique." (2)

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 1ster Theil, ed. cit.
pp. 94 sqq.

(2) Montaigne, Essais, ed. cit., p. 244.

Addison too developed the point in detail in three essays on old and popular ballads in the

(1)
Spectator. He showed that "Chevy Chace" and the "Two Children in the Wood" met his highest demands of poetry:

"When I travelled I took particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son and are most in vogue among the common people in the countries through which I passed; for it is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man. Human nature is the same in all reasonable creatures; and what ever falls in with it will meet with admirers amongst readers of all qualities and conditions.

I know nothing which more shows the essential and inherent perfection of simplicity of thought above that which I call the Gothic manner of writing than this, that the first pleases all kinds of palates, and the latter only such as have formed to themselves a wrong artificial taste. . . and the reason is plain, because the same paintings of nature which recommend it to the most ordinary reader will appear beautiful to the most refined."(2)

Addison supported his case for the universal appeal of popular poetry in two ways. He compared in detail the ballad of "Chevy Chace" and a number of passages from the Aeneid, finding numerous parallels to show, that the authors of both poems had been

(1) Numbers 70 and 75 on "Chevy Chace" and number 85 on the "Two Children in the Wood."
(2) The Spectator, ed. Aitken, London, 1905. pp. 299 sq.

inspired

"by the same kind of poetical genius and the same copyings after nature:"

and he referred to the satisfaction, which even such refined critics as Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Dorset and Dryden had found in these songs of the common people.⁽¹⁾

At the same time when the Discourse were being written, Bodmer could not have known Addison's essays, for he then possessed only the French version of the Spectator, which did not include them.⁽²⁾ It is reasonably certain, however, that he made their acquaintance not long after this. The most likely date is 1724, for in a letter written to Zellweger on 8 February of that year, one finds reference, not only to a complete English edition of the Spectator, but also to some enquiries Bodmer had made about popular poetry in

(1) The Spectator, ed. cit., pp. 322. Cp. also pp. 301 and 367: "I have heard that the late Lord Dorset, who had the greatest wit tempered with the greatest candour, and was one of the finest critics as well as the best poets of his age, had a numerous collection of old English ballads, and took a particular pleasure in the reading of them. I can affirm the same of Mr. Dryden, and know several of the most refined writers of one present age who are of the same humour."

(2) Cp. supra p. 8. The fact that these essays were not included in the French version which he possessed is mentioned by Bodmer in the Anklagung des verderbten Geschmacks, Frankfurt und Leipzig. 1728. p. 8

(1)
 Switzerland. The justice of this assumption
 is confirmed by a subsequent letter of 14th
 September 1724, in which Bodmer wrote to Zellweger:

"Ein Buchhändler von Leipzig verlangt um einen
 geziemenden Preiss die Fortsetzung der Mahler
 Discourse, oder ein ander spectatorisch Werk in
 Leipzig herauszugeben, das auf die sächsischen
 Sitten gerichtet. Ich halt desswegen mit
 Herrn Breitinger manche Unterredung, und sammle
 was mir Anlass zu seltsamen Erfindungen oder
 neuen Gedanken geben kan. Zu diesem Ende hatte
 ich auch den Kühereigen von euch begehrt, um
 damit zu weisen, dass die menschliche Natur in
 allen vernünftigen Geschöpfen die gleiche ist,
 und was immer damit übereinkömmt, lobens- und
 bedauernswerth, dem menschlichen Gemüthe behage
 und gefalle. Aber vielleicht ist der Kühereigen
 kein Gedicht sondern nur eine Melodie, der eure
 Hirten selbstgezimmerete Worte ohne Bedeutung
 gerecht machen. Ist euch aber ein ander Lied
 bekannt, darin die Stimme der Natur mit der ihr
 eigenen Wohlredenheit spricht, so theilet es
 mir mit." (2)

The conformity of these remarks with the spirit,
 and even with the letter of Addison's essays,

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- (1) Cp. Paul Geiger, Volksliedforschung und Volksliedinteresse in der Schweiz vom Anfang des 18ten Jahrhunderts, Bern, 1912, pp. 11 and 136; and H. Bodmer, Die Gesellschaft der Mahler und ihre Diskurse, Frauenfeld, 1893, pp. 88 and 92. It is not known exactly where Bodmer obtained the English version of the Spectator, but it may well have been from Zellweger, who was well versed in English literature and used his contacts in Holland to obtain English books. Cp. H. Bodmer Die Anfänge des Zürcherischen Milton, ed. cit. pp. 182 sqq.
- (2) P. Geiger, op. cit. p. 136.

leaves no doubt that these had directly influenced
(1)
Bodmer's thought.

As the correspondence with Zellweger shows,
Bodmer took some trouble to find Swiss counterparts
for the old and popular ballads described by Addison
(2)
but his enquiries met with little success. Zell-
weger sent him the text of a Sennspruch and the
music, and possibly the words, of a Kuhreigen, but
there is no evidence to show what his reaction to
them was. These were the only modern examples of
Swiss popular poetry he discovered. Of poetry
produced by the ancient Swiss he found no trace.

However, Bodmer was not entirely ignorant of
older German poetry as a whole. In Von dem Einfluss
und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft, he praised the
poetic imagination displayed by the sixteenth-cent-
ury poet Fischart in his Glückhaftes Schiff von
(3)
Zürich; and a letter to Zellweger of 28 January

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- (1) The words "dass die Natur in allen vernünftigen
Geschöpfen das gleiche ist, und was immer damit über-
einkömmt, lobens- und bedauernswerth, dem mensch-
lichen Gemüthe behage und gefalle. . ." are clearly
an echo of Addison's "Human nature is the same in
all reasonable creatures; and whatever falls in
with it will meet with admirers amongst readers of
all qualities and conditions." cp. *infra* p. 27
- (2) Extracts from subsequent letters are printed in P.
Geiger, *op. cit.* p. 137.
- (3) *Op. cit.* P. 57. "Der grosse Poet des sechszehenden
Jahrhunderts Johannes Fischart hat von dem Unter-
gange der Sonne noch einen Umstand aufgezeichnet, den
ich noch von keinem Schreiber angemerkt gefunden."

shows that he was still well acquainted with Wickram's version of Albrecht von Halberstadt's Metamorphosen, which had delighted him as a child. (1) This latter work afforded a glimpse of even older German poetry, for the original preface by Albrecht von Halberstadt, which was preserved on it, revealed that there had been German poets in the twelfth century. Besides this Bodmer must have read the brief, though highly favourable, references to mediaeval German poetry in Opitz' Aristarchus and Das (2) Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey.

In spite of all this, Bodmer showed no inclination to consider the possibility that this older German poetry might prove to embody his ideal. His disinclination was due in part to the prejudice, with which the early eighteenth century as a whole regarded everything mediaeval. Some remarks on Gothic architecture in the Discourse well express the general attitude:

"Diese gothischen Säkula der Ungeschicklichkeit hatten die Proportion der Natur verwahrloset und aus der Acht gelassen, ihre Gebäude machten

(1) Cp. Hans Bodmer. Die Anfänge des zürcherischen Milton ed. cit. pp 191 sqq. "Es gieng mir wie Europaen die Jupiter im Ochsen. . entführte, davon mein alter Ovidius singt:

Der Ochs richt sich auf unter ihr
Gantz sittlich, sagt heimlich; Wol mir (etc.)

(2) Cp. supra p. VIII

die seltsamsten Figuren, die man weder rund noch oval noch pyramidal nennen kann. . . . Diese phantastischen Baumeister haben die Schönheit eines Gebäudes in seiner ungemessenen Grösse und seinen ungeheueren Zierraten gesucht." (1)

According to Bodmer's views on character, it was theoretically impossible that a society, which had perpetrated such crimes against good taste in architecture, could produce anything better in poetry. Moreover, weight was lent to this assumption by the common association of mediaeval German poetry with the despised Meistergesang, which the work of Opitz and his successors had by no means eradicated.

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- (1) Die Discourse der Mahlern, 2ter Theil. ed. cit. 22 Discours "Woher es vornehmlich komme, dass die Kleidermoden so unaufhörlichen Veränderungen unterworfen seyn."

II

II. Bodmer's initial acceptance of the current estimate of mediaeval society and art was due to a considerable extent to his lack of detailed knowledge of the subject. However, this was soon to be remedied.

In 1725 he became a teacher of history at the Carolinum in Zürich. There his work was mainly concerned with the mediaeval origins of the Swiss confederacy. He approached his task in a manner befitting his highest ideals of historical method, using whatever material came to hand in order to discover more about the workings of human nature. His pupil and biographer, Leonard Meister, says of him:

"Der Lehrstuhl der helvetischen Geschichte war vielleicht das einzige öffentliche Amt, welche sich mit seinen Studien und seinem Charakter vertrug. . . Er bildete Menschen und Bürger; unmöglich konnte er sich zwingen Gelehrte von Handwerk zu ziehen. . . Ihnen drang er freylich kein zusammenhängendes System auf; allein er lehrte sie selbst denken. Immer war er bemüht, durch historische Beobachtungen auf die Menschheit aufmerksam zu machen, der Mensch war allemahl seine Hauptgegenstand." (1)

Thus Bodmer turned ^{the} to attention of his pupils from the outward aspect of events, to their underlying causes. The chief of these he had found to be individual and national character -

(1) L. Meister, Ueber Bodmern, Zürich, 1783, p.20.

"diejenigen Qualitäten, durch welche sich eine gantze Nation oder Person unterscheidet." (1)

Therefore, in order to derive the utmost benefit from the study of the mediaeval period, with which he now had to deal, it was necessary that he should enter as far as possible into an enlightened understanding of its peculiarities. This did not prove as difficult as one might have expected in view of his initial prejudice against it, for Bodmer's naturally enquiring mind soon took pleasure in the investigation for its own sake, regarding the unfamiliar mediaeval scene with as much satisfaction as it had regarded those described by voyagers to distant lands. Leonhard Meister's account of him continues:

"Für ihn war es das interessanteste Schauspiel, denselben (den Menschen) unter allen, auch den sonderbarsten Gestalten zu sehen. Gerne trat er aus seinem Weltalter, aus seiner Zone heraus; und indem er die Meinungen und Sitten der Zeitgenossen von sich schüttelte, erhob er sich zur reinern Menschlichkeit. Was für so manche blosser Handarbeit ist, war für ihn Experimental-Seelenlehre; Muth genug hatte er unter dem Urkundenstaube die Ahnen und die Vorwelt gleichsam aus dem Grabe zu wecken, indem er ihre Sitten und Gesetze, ihren Geist und ihre Sprache in jeder noch so verblichenen Farbenmischung studirte." (2)

(1) Die Discourse der Mahlern. 1ster Theil, ed. cit. p.26.

(2) Gp. L. Meister, op. cit. p.20.

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In 1727 Bodmer and a number of friends including J. J. Scheuchzer, founded the Helvetische Gesellschaft, the aim of which was to discuss the present aspect and the historical origins of a number of political and economic problems. This society later undertook to publish a number of the original documents of Swiss history, a knowledge of which the members deemed essential to appreciation of the character of the early periods of history they were studying. In 1735 two such collections of documents appeared; firstly the Thesaurus Historiae Helveticae, and, secondly, the first volumes of the periodical Die Helvetische Bibliothek.⁽²⁾

Of these collections, the Helvetische Bibliothek is the more interesting in the present context. Some passages from the prefaces to the first and third volumes will serve to reemphasize the nature of Bodmer's approach to the compilation of historical material of this kind. He describes the purpose of the Helvetische Bibliothek as follows:

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- (1) Cp. G. Tobler J.J. Bodmer als Geschichtschreiber. Neujahrsblatt herausgegeben von der Stadtbibliothek in Zürich auf das Jahr 1891. pp. 9 sqq.
 - (2) Thesaurus Historiae Helveticae, Zürich, 1735; Die Helvetische Bibliothek. Bestehend in historischen politischen und critischen Beyträgen zu den Geschichten des Schweizerlandes, 1735-1741.

"dem Public eine zugängliche Nachricht von allen zu den Historie ihres Vaterlandes dienenden Schriften und Urkunden mitzutheilen..... und also nach und nach die Materialien zu liefern, daraus ein geschickter Kopf, der zukünftig ist, eine ausführliche Historie, die nicht bloss die Geschichten, sondern auch die causas rerum in einer ordentlichen Verknüpfung vor Augen lege."(1)

Though the idea of such a history had been implicit in Bodmer's earlier remarks on historical method this was the first time that it had been so clearly expressed. This development may well have been due to the fact that he had recently studied Montesquieu's Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des romains (1734) to which he referred elsewhere in the Helvetische Bibliothek, describing Montesquieu as,

"ein neuer französischer Scribent, welchen den wahren Gebrauch und Nutzen der Historie in einer langen Reihe politischer Anmerkungen und Zutreffenden Applicationen gewiesen hat."(2)

For Bodmer, history written in this way served a dual purpose, providing the maximum of both moral instruction and pleasure.

"Wann die Historie ein Vorbild abgeben soll, nach welchem wir das Leben richten sollen, so muss sie uns die Absichten vor Augen legen, welche die Menschen bei einem Unternehmen gehabt."(3) -

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- (1) Op. cit. Vol I, Preface, without pagination.
 (2) Op. cit. Vol I., p.150
 (3) Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol.III, p.5.

"Eine solche umständliche und nach allen ihren verschiedenen Taten und Absichten auseinander gesetzte Historie bringt daneben auch eine recht empfindliche Belustigung, indem sie uns gleichsam zu dem Vertrauten der vorkommenden Personen macht, uns in ihr geheimstes Cabinet hinführt, und so unvermerkt in ihre Anschläge verwickelt, dass wir sie dadurch für unsere eigene ansehen." (1)

A study of the mediaeval period on these lines could not fail to produce a better understanding of it, and this better understanding in turn produced greater sympathy. Ample evidence of this is given in the article "Nachricht von der Beschaffenheit und dem Inhalt des alten Codices legum, der Richtebrief der Bürger von Zürich betitelt." (2) Here Bodmer lamented the fact that far more attention was paid to Greek and Roman, than to Swiss constitutional history. He found that there was some interest in Rudolf Brun's reforms during the early fourteenth century, but that few students cared to look further back. He realized that there was a reason for this neglect, but it was one with which he could not agree:

"Die Ursach dessen wird wohl keine andere sein, als weil man eine zu nachtheilige Meinung von der Politick derjenigen Zeiten hat, welche wir in Absicht auf die Gelehrsamkeit und Religion mit

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- (1) Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol. I. Preface without pagination.
 (2) Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol. II pp. 1 sqq.

recht barbarisch heissen. Mit alle dem möchte wohl die Frage kommen, ob selbige ungelehrte Secula diesen Nahmen in Ansehen der politischen Künste so wohl verdienen. Ich bin beglaubet, dass sie in der Politick nichts weniger als barbarisch waren. . . wie kann derselbe Staat in so vielfältigen Anfallen, die von aussätzigen und Freyheit-hassenden, dabei sehr mächtigen Nachbarn darauf gethan werden, gantz aufrecht geblieben seyn, wenn er nicht so wohl gantz an sich selbst stark gebauet gewesen." (1)

The justice of this assumption was proved to Bodmer by the Richtebrief. in which he found a full account of the internal and external policy, the commerce and social life of Zürich about the year (2) 1300. Thus the reputation of at least one aspect of mediaeval life was redeemed.

Bodmer took every care to present the text of the Richtebrief in such a way that his readers should appreciate its unique quality to the full. He adhered as closely as possible to the original, making no attempt to modernize the archaic language, which he regarded as a reflection of the peculiar quality of the thoughts it expressed. He explained his disinclination to provide an easier means of obtaining knowledge of the content of the document by saying,

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- (1) Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol. II, pp 8 sq.
 (2) Bodmer decided in favour of this date on the strength of internal evidence. cp. Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol. II, p.8.

"Allein wenn man alle diese Sachen darinne finden will, muss man den Codicern mit einem besondern Fleiss recognosciren und vergleichen. Man muss sich die Sprache derselben vollkommen bekannt machen, und auch andere Autores von demselben Alter gelesen haben." (1)

Thus his readers were encouraged to attempt to study the content and language of the Richtebrief in their own terms, with a minimum of reference to modern German thought and expression. The only aid to study given was a glossary, and here too the same principle was employed in that numerous examples of the usage of older words in different contexts were given.

The glossary was arranged alphabetically. It lacked any systematic grammatical commentary, but provided comments on unfamiliar constructions and, besides the alternative usages already mentioned, frequent explanations by reference to modern Swiss dialect usage. (2) This last characteristic is especially

(1) Helvetische Bibliothek, Vol. II p.11

(2) Cp. Helvetische Bibliothek, vol. II, pp. 84, sqq. "Erklärung der uralten Wörter und Redensarten in dem Richte Briefe der Bürger von Zürich." The two examples, which follow, give a fair illustration of the character of the glossary. P.85. Bas - Ob joch das were, das er den win bas wurde gebende. Ge- setzt, ungeachtet, dass er den Wein wohlfeiler würde geben. Nota etiam gerundium, wurde gebende p.86. Beren - Bert. Schlägt. Wir brauchen in der Schweiz noch: Leinen beeren. Einen erbeeren. Walther von der Vogelweide:
Hie vor do beret man die Jungen
Die pilagen vrecher Zungen. "

interesting, since it reveals that Bodmer had already noticed that similarity between the older German language and modern Swiss dialect, which (1) greatly assisted his study of the older language.

Professional interest in the documents of mediaeval history and in the language in which they were expressed, and the conviction, that in respect of political institutions at least, mediaeval society had attained a universally accepted excellence, contributed to ensure that Bodmer would regard with interest any specimens of mediaeval German poetry, which now came to his notice.

The likelihood of this was perhaps increased by the fact, that, by 1729, he had begun to show curiosity about mediaeval poetry of another kind, namely Dante's Divina Commedia. The initial encouragement to study this work may well have come from the Italian critic Pietro di Calepio, with whom Bodmer had corresponded since 1728. Calepio, who knew of Bodmer's interest in Milton's Paradise Lost, probably directed his friend's attention to the poem, which

(1) Bodmer's own observation of this similarity may well have been supplemented by the remarks upon it made by Goldast in the Paraenetic (cp. ed. cit. pp. 357, 429), for by now he knew Goldast's work. (cp. infra, p. 45.)

could be regarded as its counterpart in Italian. By July 1729, Bodmer certainly knew something of the Divina Commedia, for he then mentioned the story of Ugolino in a letter to Calepio, and in the following year, he asked Calepio to suggest a trustworthy edition of Dante's works,⁽¹⁾ though there is no evidence to show the precise nature of Bodmer's reactions to the Divina Commedia at this time, it is clear that his interest had been aroused.

In spite of these inducements, it seems unlikely that Bodmer was sufficiently enthusiastic as yet to wish to embark on a serious study of mediaeval German poetry, which, in the 1720ies was no easy task. What little material existed was scattered and often difficult to obtain. Even the main source of information, Goldast's Paraenetici, was extremely rare, before it was reprinted in Schilter's Thesaurus in 1727. Though Bodmer was certainly in a better position than most to ^{become acquainted with the} available material, because

(1) The letters from Calepio to Bodmer are preserved in MS Bodmer 13 c. of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. The first is dated 17. Nov. 1728; and that replying to Bodmer's request for information about editions of Dante, April 1730. Part of Bodmer's letter of 12. July 1729, containing reference to Ugolino, is reprinted in the Briefwechsel von der Natur des poetischen Geschmacks, Zürich, 1736, pp. 41. sqq.

his historical work caused him to deal with the kind of literature, in which much of it was preserved, there is no indication that he was inspired by any such discoveries.

It is far more probable that his first real interest in the subject dates from his acquaintance with Gottsched's Beyträge zur critischen Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit, which made the results of previous research on mediaeval German poetry readily available. As Bodmer had corresponded with Gottsched since the beginning of 1732 it seems likely that he knew the Beyträge from the first part, which appeared in that year. There, and in subsequent numbers, were presented articles referring in more or less detail to individual Middle High German poems; and reviews of the works of a number of literary historians, whose studies also touched upon the Middle High German period. (1) The form of Bod-

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- (1) During the years 1732-1735 the following reference to separate MHG poems appeared in the Beyträge:
 1732, 1stes Stück, (1) "Von deutschen Uebersetzungen der meisten alten Lateinischen Scribenten." (A. von Halberstadts Metamorphosen, H. von Veldekes Eneide pp. 26.); (6) "Anmerkungen von der von Meister Albrecht verdeutschten Metamorphosen."
 The reviews of literary historical works which appeared during the same period are as follows:
 1733. 2tes Stück, (8) "Ortlobs Von den verschiedenen Altern der deutschen Poesie."
 7tes Stück, (3) "Georg Litzels Der undeutsche Catholik oder historischer Bericht von dem allzu grossen Nachlässigkeit der Römisch-catholischen - in Verbesserung der deutschen Sprache und Poesie, Jena, 1730."
 11tes Stück, (3) "J. C. Wagenseils Buch von der Meistersinger holdseligen Kunst, Altdorf, 1697."

mer's subsequent work suggests that this latter group, which revealed some early attempts to write a connected history of German literature, impressed him most deeply. It seems that these showed him the possibility of approaching mediaeval German poetry as he had approached mediaeval history. As the study of mediaeval history had been adapted to serve the investigation of social development in general, so the study of mediaeval literature could be used to throw light on literary development in general. Moreover, as in history, so in literature, such studies of an individual period would be even more valuable, when incorporated into a connected history, in which the whole process of cause and effect could be followed.

Bodmer regarded enquiries of this kind as of value in themselves, whether or not the particular social and literary phenomena observed possessed any intrinsic merit. As it happened, however, there was much in the Beyträge to suggest that mediaeval poetry, like mediaeval society, had some redeeming features. This was made particularly clear by a summary of Ortlob's account of the period between the mid-twelfth century and the Interregnum in the thirteenth century, which Ortlob described as the prime of the life of German literature.

"Denn um diese Zeit ^{und} wird in den nachfolgenden Zeiten war sie (die Poesie) nicht allein an dem kaiserlichen, sondern auch andern angesehen Höfen in höchstem Werthe; und wurden öfters unter den vornehmsten Edelleuten ordentliche Wettstrei-

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te in derselben angestellet, auch den geschicktesten ansehnliche Preise ausgetheilet. . . . Den vornehmsten Stoff ihrer Gedichte gaben ihnen nachdrückliche Ermahnungen zu guten Sitten und Tugenden an die Hand; doch wurden sie auch öfters das Herz einer jungen Schönen zu bezwingen glücklich angewendet, oder aber die ausnehmenden Laster der Geistlichen und Hofleute auf eine satirische und beissende, doch dabey redliche Art, zu bestrafen gebraucht."(1)

The results of Bodmer's reading of the Beyträge are to be seen in the poem Character der deutschen Gedichte of 1734, which gives a survey of the development of the German poetry from the bards to Bodmer's own day. (2)

Following the general outline of Ortlob's account, he described in turn the lost poetry of the bards; the decline of language and literature under a benighted monkish tyranny; the gradual improvement of language and verse forms leading to the sudden flowering of poetry under the Hohenstaufens; and the equally sudden reversion to barbarity during the Interregnum.

The form of Bodmer's account of the Hohenstaufen era, is particularly interesting. The information provided in the Beyträge would have made it quite possible for him to speak of a number of individual poets and poems,

(1) Beyträge, 2tes Stück, p. 285.

(2) The first edition appeared with no notice of the place or date of publication. 1734 is the date assigned to it by J. Baechthold. Op. Vier kritische Gedichte von J. J. Bodmer, ed. Baechthold, D.A.D. des 18ten Jahrhunderts No.12, Herlbronn, 1883, where the Character der teutschen Gedichte is reprinted pp. 3 sqq.

but he made no attempt to do this. Instead, he chose to give the briefest historical outline, merely sketching in the beginning and end of the period, and for the rest, he simply paraphrased a series of strophes from the Wins
(1)
bekin. He began:

"Von Hohen Stauffens Hauss, das Cron und Apfel
führte,

Und auch Sicilien mit starker Faust regierte
Entsprang aus finstrer Nacht der ungewohnte
Strahl

Und schimmerte von dar durch Deutschlands weiten
Saal.

Wir hören noch mit Lust die edle Mutter singen!"
(2)

and ended:

"Also hat Win^Sbecks Frau die Laute angestimmt,
Mit zärtlichem Affekt, worinn der Geist noch
glimmet.

Mit Conradinens Blut zerann die kurze Pracht
Und Deutschland fiel zurück in die barbarische
Nacht."(3)

Bodmer's reason for employing this method must have been, that he wished to use as much as possible of the space he could allot to mediaeval poetry, in order to emphasize what he considered to be most essential. The main point for him was the valuable moral example set by certain aspects of mediaeval life which he found reflected in a poem such as the Winsbekin.

(1) Cp. Goldast's Paraenetic, ed. cit. pp. 323-336
(Strophes - 13, 16, 19, 21, and 31)

(2) D.L.D des 18ten Jahrhunderts, No. 12, p.4 lines 65-69.

(3) Ed. cit. p.6 lines 103-106.

The verse form in which Bodmer chose to present his literary history, was a valuable aid to securing a more general popularity than such works generally enjoyed.⁽¹⁾ However, the long alexandrine line presented some difficulty, when the question of paraphrasing the MHG poem arose. In spite of efforts to include some of the original words and turns of phrase, the demands of the longer line necessitated so many alterations and additions, that the mediaeval character of the poem was all but lost. Whereas Goldast's text gives:

"Ein wiblich wib mit zühten sprach
 Zir tochter, der sie schone pflae
 Wol mir das ich dich ie gesach
 Gehoechet si der suesse tagc
 Da din geburt von erst an lae
 Sit ich mit ganzer warheit wol mit wiser lere
 sprechen mae,
 Din anblic ist des Meien zit
 Got suln wir drumbe iemer loben, der also riche
 gabe uns git." (2)

Bodmer has:

"Wir hören noch mit Lust die edle Mutter singen,
 Die für der Tochter Wohl ein Danklied Gott zu
 bringen,
 Die sanfte Laute stimmt, und preisst den werthen
 Tag,
 An welchen sie mit ihr in Kindes-Wehen lag.
 Wir sehen ihr das Kind selbst in dem Herzen lie-
 gen."

(1) Bodmer was probably led to chose verse form by knowledge of Addison's poem, "An Account of the Lives of the Greatest English Poets." (1694). (cp. The Works of the English Poets. ed. Chalmers, London, 1810, pp.529 sqq.)

(2) Goldast, Paraenetici, ed. cit. p. 323.

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Des Frühlings helle Pracht bringt ihr nicht
 mehr Vergnügen,
 Als dessen Mund zu sehen; In Augen thuts ihr
 wohl
 So lobt und liebet es auch wie eine Mutter soll!"
 (1)

Under these circumstances it was obviously very difficult for Bodmer to preserve the character of his original. However, bearing in mind the meticulous care, with which he had reproduced the text of the Richtebrief, one might (2) have expected a little more effort in this direction. He could perhaps have printed the MHG original in a note, but he did not do so.

The Character der deutschen Gedichte provides one other indication of the nature of Bodmer's interest in MHG poetry at this time. Already in Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Poesie he had shown his appreciation of the poetic imagery used by the sixteenth-century poet (3) Fischart. Now it seems that a twelfth-century poet had impressed him with a similar quality, for towards the end of the poem, when discussing a quite different period, he introduced an image used by Conrad von Würzburg.

The original as quoted by Godast in the Paraenetici reads:

(1) Ed. cit. pp. 5 - 6, lines 69 - 76.

(2) Cp. supra p. 38-39.

(3) Cp. supra p. 30.

"Her Mars der rihset in dem lande,
 Der hat den werden Got Amur
 Verheert mit roube und mit brande
 Des sint die Minne worden sin."(1)

Bodmer gives:

"Als Mars zu seiner Zeit erwacht auf Raub und
 Brand
 Und Amors Reich verheert, ihn selbst hernach
 verbrannt."(2)

Thus, besides appealing to Bodmer's moral sense, MHG poetry had already begun to capture his poetic imagination. A further, somewhat different instance of this is to be found in a passage of the Character der deutschen Gedichte, which refers to Lohenstein:

"Als seine dunkle Sprach' und Kissling-harten
 Thönen
 Auf dem Parnass erklang, erschranken die Camönen
 Die Furcht ergriffe sie, dass Meister Klinsohr
 käm
 Und einen Ueberfall des Berges unternähmen."(3)

The romantic figure of the magician Klingsohr, who played so important a part in the Wartburgkrieg, had clearly made
 (4)
 a strong appeal to Bodmer's mind.

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- (1) Paraenetic, ed. cit. p.455.
 (2) Ed. cit. p.11, lines 234 - 236.
 (3) Ed. cit. p.16, lines 385 - 388.
 (4) There is no indication as to the exact source from which Bodmer got his information about Klingsohr, but it could possibly have been the article in the Beyträge on Albrecht von Halberstadt's Metamorphosen. (cp. supra, p.38, footnote (i)), where the question of the Wartburgkrieg arose, and historical sources of information about it were enumerated. Among these sources was J. B. Mencke's Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Leipzig, 1728-30, in which Johannes Rothe's Thuringian Chronicle and Vita St. Elisabethae appeared.

By 1735 Bodmer's interest in MHG poetry was lively enough to lead him to make some independent enquiries. On 28. March 1735, he wrote to tell Gottsched of a discovery he had made:

"Neulich ist mir ein zer^rissenes Blatt von Pergament in die Hände gefallen, auf welchem ich hier beigelegte Zeilen gelesen habe. Ich setze es über Friedrich II. Zeiten hinaus. Man siehet leicht, dass es ein Stück von einer Romanze ist, mit welchem Namen man die poemata epica derselben Zeit belegte. Ich wünschte, dass ich ein ganzes Werk von dieser Art zu sehen bekäme, damit ich die Regeln eines solchen daraus erkennen könnte." (1)

The fragment in question was most probably that of Conrad von Würzburg's Partonopier und Melior, which was found in the Bürgerbibliothek in Zürich and from which Breitinge^r later quoted a few lines in the Critische Dichtkunst.⁽²⁾

Bodmer's letter continued,

"Ist nichts der Art in Sachsen dem Untergange entronnen? Ich entsinne mich, dass in der königlichen Bibliothek zu Paris etliche Codices Mspti von dergleichen poetischen Ritterbüchern noch vorhanden sind, und zweifle nicht, dass die Erlaubniss leicht zu erhalten wäre, eine Abschrift davon am Orte selbst zu nehmen. Vielleicht könnten Euer Hoch Edl. einen gesitteten jungen Menschen, der seiner Lust halben nach Paris ginge, schon darzu bereden, dass er sich

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- (1) The letter is reprinted in T. W. Danzel's Gottsched und seine Zeit, Leipzig, 1848, p. 192. Danzel gives the date as 28. March 1748, but J. Crüger corrected this to 28. March 1735, after consulting Gottsched's letters in Leipzig. (cp. "Briefe von Schoepflin und andern Strassburger Gelehrten an Bodmer und Breitinge^r." Strassburger Studien, Vol. II (Strassburg, 1884) pp. 440 sq.)
- (2) Cp. J. J. Breitinge^r, Critische Dichtkunst, Vol. II, Zürich, 1740, p. 151.

Mühe gabe, einen von diesen Codicibus abzuschreiben; damit würde gewiss dem Studio Etymologico, Grammatico und insgemein der Deutschen Sprache und Poesie ein vielfältiger Nutzen zuwachsen." (1)

... appears to have had no immediate effect on his literary theory. In the *Einleitung von der Natur der poetischen Gesetze*, in which he continued the enquiry into the implications of his poetic theory begun in *Von der Einflüsse des Gebrauchs der Einbildungskraft*, he was content to repeat without substantial modification the views expressed in letters to Galois written in 1729 and 1731. (1) The question at issue in that correspondence was, whether poetry should be judged by personal feeling or by the application of rational principles. Schiller had taken the latter standpoint, maintaining in effect, that literary taste is dependent on universally and eternally valid principles of human behaviour, and that there can thus be but one standard of excellence for all times and all places. Though he did not pursue the historical

(1) Danzel, op. cit. p. 192.

The existence of the Paris MS was revealed in Schiller's *Thesaurus*. In Schiller's preface to *Tomæ III*, the number of the MS and a list of the poets, whose works it contained was given:

"Catalogus Autorum quorum poemata continentur Codice MS to 7266 to Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis."

(1) *Einleitung von der Natur der poetischen Gesetze*, Berlin, 1730.

The growth of Bodmer's interest in both social and literary history, which found expression in the Helvetische Bibliothek and in the Charakter der deutschen Gedichte, appears to have had no immediate effect on his literary theory. In the Briefwechsel von der Natur des poetischen Geschmacks, in which he continued the enquiry into the implications of his poetic theory begun in Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft, he was content to repeat without substantial modification the views expressed in letters to Calepio written in 1729 and 1731.⁽¹⁾ The question at issue in that correspondence was, whether poetry should be judged by personal feeling or by the application of rational principles. Bodmer had taken the latter standpoint, maintaining in effect, that literary taste is dependent on universally and eternally valid principles of human behaviour, and that there can thus be but one standard of excellence for all times and all places. Though he did not pursue the historical implications of this belief in any detail, a passage from the fourth letter suggests the tendency of his thoughts. There he sought to discredit purely capricious judgements by pointing out the absurdity of periodical changes in attitude to one and the same work:

(1) Briefwechsel von der Natur des poetischen Geschmacks, Zürich, 1736.

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"Sagt man sie (die Empfindung.) könne nicht fehlen, so würde folgen, dass ein und dasselbe Werck zugleich und auf einmal gut und schlimm seyn, ferner dass mit Verlauf der Zeit eine Schrift oder eine Stelle, die vor diesem schön gewesen, schlimm werden könnte. . . wie auch . . . bekandt ist, dass eine Schrift, die in einem Seculo das Glück gehabt, jedermanns Beifall zu erhalten, in dem folgenden fast durchgehends verachtet worden." (1)

He took for examples Corneille's Le Cid and Milton's Paradise Lost, saying of the latter:

"Ihr habet auch gehöret, dass des vortrefflichen Englischen Poeten Johannes Miltons Gedicht von dem Verlust des Paradieses lange im Staube gelegen und unbekannt geblieben ist, biss dass etliche ungemeine Köpfe, die Leute von seinem unschätzbarem Werthe unterrichtet, und durch gründliche Schlüsse und Beweise, den kranken Geschmack und die verdorbene Empfindung ihrer Nation gestärket und wieder hergestellt haben." (2)

Thus Bodmer's only explanation of periodic changes in judgement was the temporary eclipse of natural good taste. He was not yet ready to apply to the criticism of poetry, those considerations of the effect of particular circumstances which he had commended to the poet and to ^{the} historian engaged in creative work.

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- (1) Briefwechsel, p. 44
(2) Briefwechsel, p. 45.

III

During the next three years, however, the more liberal tendencies in Bodmer's thought gained ground and in 1740 and 1741, found expression in the four main critical works: Bodmer's Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie, Breitinger's Critische Abhandlung von der Natur und Absichten und dem Gebrauche der Gleichnisse, Breitinger's Critische Dichtkunst and Bodmer's Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter⁽¹⁾. In considering these works, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish clearly between the individual contributions of Bodmer and Breitinger, but, on the whole, it seems justifiable to assume, that while each stresses aspects of peculiar interest to himself, there was close collaboration and agreement between them on all important points.

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- (1) The full titles are as follows: J.J. Bodmer, Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie und dessen Verbindung mit dem Wahrscheinlichen. In einer Verteidigung des Gedichts Joh. Miltons von dem verlohrnen Paradiese. Der beygeführt ist Jos. Addisons Abhandlung von den Schönheiten in demselben Gedichte, Zürich, 1740.

J.J. Breitinger, Critische Abhandlung von der Natur und Absichten und dem Gebrauche der Gleichnisse. Durch J.J. Bodmer besorget und zum Drucke befördert, Zürich, 1740.

J.J. Breitinger, Critische Dichtkunst Worinnen die poetische Mahlerey in Absicht auf die Erfindung im Grunde untersucht und mit Beyspielen erläutert wird. Mit einer Vorrede eingeführt von J.J. Bodmer; Fortsetzung der Critischen Dichtkunst. Worinnen die poetische Mahlerey in Absicht auf den Ausdruck und den Farben abgehandelt wird, mit einer Vorrede von J.J. Bodmer. Zürich und Leipzig, 1740.

J.J. Bodmer, Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter, Zürich und Leipzig, 1741.

Although Bodmer's Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter was the last of the four critical treatises to be published, it follows most naturally the line of his earlier progress towards a better understanding of older German literature, developing a number of ideas which had been shaped to some extent already in the historical works and in Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungskraft. In the latter, Bodmer had stressed the poet's duty to create psychologically and historical^{ly} accurate descriptions, recommending a close study of the various influences which would personal character and language. He now repeated those recommendations in two chapters of the Critische Betrachtungen: "Von den Charactern der Nationen", and "Von den Charactermässigen Reden der Nationen". There were, however, two significant points of difference from the earlier work.

In the first place, the spirit, in which the description of historical circumstances in poetry was undertaken, had undergone a change. In the essay of 1727, the process had been conceived mainly in terms of a priori reasoning. Now, however, Bodmer called for a closer study of historical detail, and above all, for an effort of imagination to identify oneself completely with one's subject - "Eine Geschicklichkeit der Einbildungskraft, die sich ganz und gar von den Sitten und Gewohnheiten seines eigenen Landes befreyen und in die

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entferntesten Länder und Zeiten versetzen kan." (2)

Here, as so often, Bodmer's literary work was indebted to his historical studies, for both these requirements had already been stressed in relation to history in the Helvetische Bibliothek. Applied to literature, they would, on the one hand, give depth to the vision of the past presented in poetry; and, on the other, perhaps direct the poet's mind from exclusive preoccupation with his own creations, to a more generally sympathetic understanding of circumstances different from his own.

A second important difference from the earlier essay is shown by the inclusion among Bodmer's sources of Du Bos' Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture. (3)

In this work attention was focussed on an aspect of the influence of environment, which had not been considered in Bodmer's previous studies. Du Bos, like earlier participants in the controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns, was much concerned with the problem of the origin of genius, and in the Réflexions he sought to throw fresh light upon this, by analysing the effects of moral and physical environment on the distribution of artistic talent between various nations and periods. His researches

(1) 14^{ter} and 17^{ter} Abschnitt.

(2) Critische Betrachtungen, p. 512.

(3) The Réflexions were published in Paris in 1719. Bodmer's allusion to them is on p. 448 of the Critische Betrachtungen.

led him to the conclusion, that poetry, like every other human activity, is dependent on the circumstances in which it arises. Du Bos and also the Swiss critics saw two main reasons for this dependence. There was, firstly, the inevitable, almost unconscious limitation to a certain range of experience. To this was added another kind of dependence, springing from certain beliefs as to the nature and function of art, beliefs which had the effect of demanding the poet's concentration on his own time. The first of these was, that truth to nature can be achieved best by taking a present and familiar model. The second was based on a view of the social function of art. In this instance the point is put most clearly by Breitinger in the first section of the Critische Dichtkunst, where he says, that the task of poetry is to present philosophical truths in a pleasant form to those who would not otherwise understand them⁽¹⁾. Thus, for him, poetry was essentially a popular art, designed not for an intellectual élite, but for the general run of readers - "eine Kunst, die für den grossen Hauffen gewidmet ist."⁽²⁾ He showed, moreover, that in order to address himself successfully to such an audience, the poet must speak in terms most familiar to it, namely those of everyday thought and experience.

(1) Critische Dichtkunst I, pp. 4 seq.

(2) Critische Dichtkunst I, p. 161.

Obviously poetry created in such circumstances could not be judged except by reference to them. Du Bos' realization of this is shown by a passage in the second part of the Réflexions, where he attacked certain critics who had found fault with the Ancients, showing that many of the errors of which the Ancients were accused, existed only in the minds of critics who lacked historical understanding.⁽¹⁾ Hints of a similar approach to the criticism of Homer appeared also in Pope's preface to his translation of the Iliad, and in the works of the Dacier, all of which were familiar to Bodmer and Breitinger.⁽²⁾

The way in which Bodmer also came to adapt those principles, which he had hitherto applied only to the creation of poetry, to the criticism of poetry as well, is clearly shown in the Critische Betrachtungen. He begins by re-emphasizing the duty of poets to make their descriptions as nearly as possible historically accurate :

"Wenn denn ein Poet die Personen und Dinge in solchen Umständen beschreiben will, welche dem Decoro und ihrer Würdigkeit gemäss sind, so ist vonnöthen, dass er sich den Charakter der verschiedenen Vöelcker, und die Zeiten, aus welchen er seine Personen nimmt, ihre Gewohnheiten und Gebräuche genau bekannt mache. Dieses ist für ihn eine Grund-Regel."

(1) Réflexions critiques, ed.cit., II^{ième} Partie, Section 37, pp. 507-8.

(2) Cp. The Iliad of Homer translated by Mr. Pope, London, 1715-20, Vol.I, preface, (without pagination); L'Iliade traduite en Français. Par Madame Dacier, Paris 1699; La Poétique d'Aristote traduite en Français, Paris, 1692.

Then comes the transition :

"Homer ist zwar getadelt worden, dass er dieser Regel in Aufführung seiner Helden, genau gefolget hat, man hat in den Umständen, in welchen er sie vorstellt, eine Art des Wohlstandes gefodert, die in seinem Weltalter und Land unbekannt war." (2)

In undertaking to defend Homer on historical grounds, Bodmer showed no especial daring, for the way was already well prepared. However, surer proof of the sincerity of his advocacy of historical methods was given, when he showed himself prepared to apply them also to a mediaeval poet, to Dante :

"Diese Vertheidigung haben die guten italienischen Kunstrichter sich genöthiget gesehen, auch für ihren alten Poeten Dantes zu gebrauchen, nachdem einige, die zwar mit lateinischer, griechischer und hebräischer Wissenschaft wohl versehen waren, aber von dem Zustande der Gelehrsamkeit und den Sitten Italiens zu Dantes Zeiten nicht genug wussten, solche Sachen in diesem Poeten bestraffet hatten, welche ihrem Geschmacke nicht gemäss waren; unter andern viele lateinischen Formeln der Rede und andere, die in den letzten Jahrhunderten nicht mehr gebräuchlich waren. Man hat ihnen daher mit Recht vorgehalten, dass Dantes ohne diese Dinge nicht mehr Dantes wäre, und wenn selbige ihnen misspielen, die veraltete Gewohnheiten Schuld daran wären, welche Leute, die an die jetzigen gewöhnt sind, plump vorkommen, ob sie dem Dantes und andern gleich nicht so vorkamen." (2)

Bodmer's views on Dante were certainly far more independent than those on Homer, but the reference to "die guten italienischen Kunstrichter" shows that even here he was not without predecessors, the chief of whom was probably Gravina. (3)

(1) Critische Betrachtungen, pp. 80-81.

(2) Critische Betrachtungen, pp. 81-82.

(3) Cp. G.V. Gravina, Della Ragion Poetica, Rome, 1708. Bk. I, Chaps. i, iv, ix-xiii.

The growth of a historical approach to criticism was not the only advance towards a better understanding of unfamiliar forms of poetry to be made in the critical works of 1740 and 1741. On the aesthetic side, too, hopeful developments sprang from Bodmer's and Breitinger's deeper investigations of the nature of the relationship between poetry and the needs of the human mind. The most striking aspect of these investigations was the elaboration of the theory, that the mind will respond most readily to the charm of novelty. Breitinger⁹, in the Critische Dichtkunst, made clear the implications of this theory for poets. He insisted, that in order to hold the attention of their readers, they must strive to overcome the dulling effects of familiarity. This, he thought, could be achieved by depicting as far as possible only novel -, and above all marvellous events; and elsewhere doing one's utmost to lend a marvellous air to everyday things. But even with this latter proviso, it seemed that the world of common experience could hardly provide sufficient material. However, Breitinger saw a way of overcoming this difficulty by no longer confining oneself to that world. He was ready to throw open also the invisible and the possible worlds. Of these, the latter was most highly commended to poets because of its greater appeal to the reader's curiosity. Its scope was defined as follows :

"Allem, da dieser Zusammenhang der wärklichen Dinge, so wie die gegenwärtige Welt nennen, nicht lediglich notwendig ist, und unendliche vielemahle koennte verändert werden, so müssen ausser derselben noch unzählbar viele Welten möglich sein, in welchen ein anderer Zusammenhang der Dinge, andere Gesetze der Natur und Bewegung ---- ja gar Geschööpfe und Wesen von einer ganz neuen und besonderen Art Platz haben." (1)

This might ^{at} first seem to give full justification to every conceivable flight of poetic fancy, but there were reservations. Though the poetic truth ruling in the possible worlds, was held to be exempt from the laws governing the truth of the understanding, it too was subject to the fundamental order of all natural phenomena. Therefore, since the human mind was naturally attuned to that order, it would only accept what was probable in accordance with them, and any poet, who failed to keep within the bounds of that probability, would risk making himself ridiculous.

Inspite of these reservations, the theory of the marvelous in poetry succeeded in extending the range of its subject matter to admit the exercise of the poetic imagination in forms, which would previously have seemed unjustifiable. In his examination of these forms, Bodmer particularly, noticed a similarity between them and the practice of some older poets. The Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie is the most fruitful source of observations of this kind. Bodmer undertook there to defend Milton's presentation of angels and

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, 3^{ter} Abschnitt, "Von der Nachahmung der Natur", p.56.

spirits, showing that he had nowhere transgressed the laws of poetic probability. Twice he supported his case by reference to older literature. First came Dante :

"Wenn es notwendig wäre, unsern Poeten mit dem Exempel vornehmer Vorgänger zu schützen, könnte ich gedenken, dass die berühmtesten Dichter, die das Herz gehabt haben, die unsichtbaren und uncörperlichen Engel aufzuführen, sich kein Bedenken gemacht haben, ihnen die sichtbare Gestalt mittlest des Cörpers mitzuteilen. Die drei Gedichte des Florentinischen Poeten von der Hölle, dem Fegefeuer, und dem Paradies, die vom Anfang bis zum Ende aus der unsichtbaren Welt hergekommen sind, verkleiden alle Wesen derselben in cörperliche Gestalten". (1)

Later, in a discussion of Milton's treatment of the spirits in Chaos, Bodmer mentioned too the poetic inventions of the ancient Germans, saying :

"da sie (die Wesen, die Milton in dem Chaos gesetzt hat.) nicht unmöglich sind, so sind sie in einer solchen Entfernung von uns wahrscheinlich genug, und dieses in keinem geringern Grade als die Wasser- und Luft-Geister, die Bergnymphen, die Kobolde, ~~die Kibelde~~, die Aelfen der Alten deutschen, die ebenfalls ihr Wesen dem Poeten und der Phantasie zu danken haben. (2)

Breitinger too found justification for the acceptance in poetry of those old and popular beliefs, which serve to introduce a touch of the marvellous. This he did by means of his theory that poetry is essentially a popular art with a duty to reflect popular opinion. In view of this, any opinions generally held, attained the degree of probability required in poetry.

(1) Britische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren, p. 35

(2) Britische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren, p. 166.

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"Da um die gemeine Sage bei dem grössten Hauffen der Menschen, in einem so grossen Ansehen stehet, und ihre Lehren und Meinungen so leicht Eingang finden, so ist es nicht zu verwundern, dass die poetische Kunst der Nachahmung, die sich begnüget ihre Vorstellung wahrscheinlich zu machen, sich öfters der gemeinen Sage mit gutem Nutzen bedienet, damit sie ihre Erzählungen recht wunderbar mache, ohne Besorgnis, dass sie die Wahrscheinlichkeit verlieren." (1)

In practice all this amounted to no more than a justification of the use of classical mythology. However, that justification was now based on a general principle which could be equally well applied to justify the use of bodies of popular belief hitherto less familiar to modern poets.

The general conclusion as to the nature of the processes of literature, which was drawn as a result of these developments in the historical and aesthetic fields, is best expressed by Breitingen in a passage of the Critische Dichtkunst :

"Was nun insbesondere die nach Zeit und Ort so verschiedene Gewohnheiten, Sitten, Gebräuche und Meinungen gantzer Vöelcker anbelanget, so muss man freylich gestehen, dass das poetische Schöne in dieser Absicht am wenigsten an eine besondere Zeit oder Ort kan gebunden und festgestellt werden, alldieweil diese Sachen durch ihre stete Veränderung den Begriff von dem Schönen und den Preiss des verwundersamen Neuen in diesem Stücke mitverändern. Was zu einer Zeit vor schön anstaendig und verwundersam gehalten worden, dass kan bey geänderten Sitten in Vergleichung mit neuen Begriffen von dem Schönen einen gantz widrigen Eindruck machen." (2)

Thus it was established that, while the principles underlying poetic creation, the relation between human needs and

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, 9^{ter} Abschnitt, "Von der Kunst gemeinen Dingen das Ansehen der Neuheit zu geben", p.140.

(2) Critische Dichtkunst, p. 126.

poetry remain valid for all time, the individual manifestations of these principles may vary according to time and place.

As has been shown, Bodmer met little difficulty in applying historical standards to the criticism of Homer and Dante. Particularly in the case of Homer the ground was well prepared; and, moreover, the historical situation reflected in Homeric poetry was one of which Bodmer could wholeheartedly approve, for he found in early Greece those same qualities of primitive virtue, which had so impressed him in ancient Swiss society⁽¹⁾. In the case of Dante too, there was some precedent in the work of earlier critics. Here of course the historical background was less sympathetic, but the situation was redeemed by the facts that the Divina Commedia was played mainly on an other-worldly plane, and that Dante had shown such skill in portraying the invisible world. After his historical justification of Dante in the Critische Betrachtungen, Bodmer said :

"Ich gedanke dieser Entschuldigung des florentinischen Poeten desto höher, weil er die Kunst vortrefflich war, die uns die Sachen gleichsam zu sehen gibt, und welcher in einer ganz fleissigen Erzählung derer Umstände besteht, da nichts ungemeldet vorbegegangen wird, und insonderheit die Stellungen und Gebärden ausgesetzt werden." (2)

(1) Cp. Critische Betrachtungen, pp. 80-81. Here Bodmer attacked a critic, who had admittedly examined the historical background to Homer's work, but had condemned the Homeric Age as boorish. - "wobey ich noch anmerken muss, dass er statt bürgerlich mit bessern Recht das Wort unschuldig oder einfältig gesetzt hätte."

(2) Critische Betrachtungen, p. 82

It remains to see how Bodmer reacted to a kind of poetry, the content and expression of which had hitherto aroused strong critical prejudice, as, for example, the pseudo-romances of chivalry. The attitude towards them is particularly important because, of all the poetry discussed in the years 1740-1741, these alone bear any direct relation to the subject matter of HH poetry.

The first reference was made by Breitinger in the Critische Dichtkunst, when, having defined the bounds of poetic probability, he proceeded to warn his readers against infringements of them. There he distinguished between the marvellous and the merely phantastic, giving as example of the latter the romances of Amadis and Lancelot.

"Hingegen scheinen allzu wunderbare Meinungen falsch, und über die Schnur getrieben. In den Romanen von Amadis, von Lancelot und andern irrenden Rittern, fehlt es fürwahr an Wunderbaren nicht, im Gegentheil sind sie damit angefüllt, aber ihre Erfindungen ohne Wahrscheinlichkeit und ihre allzu wunderthätigen Begebenheiten verursachen bey Lesern von gesetztem Urtheil, die an Virgil und seines gleichen einen Geschmack finden lauter Skel." (1)

Somewhat similar views were expressed by Bodmer in a section of the Critische Betrachtungen entitled "Von dem Character des Don quixote und des Sancho Pansa". (2) Don Quixote is described as a symbolic figure invented by Cervantes in order to hold up to ridicule a certain

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, p. 133.

(2) Critische Betrachtungen, pp. 513 sqq.

eccentricity of the Spanish people. This was their passion for exaggerated, un-natural forms of gallantry which they derived from romances of chivalry. Bodmer found those forms of gallantry inexplicable and contrary to the course of nature, and he expatiated on the artificiality of courtly love. Don Quixote's defence of romances, which Bodmer quoted at length, probably did good service in increasing his knowledge of the subject, but it did not alter his views as to its merits.

The apparent lack of sympathetic insight on the part of Bodmer and Breitinger cannot be condemned lightly as the triumph of prejudice. Prejudice was certainly strong, but not strong enough to make them abandon their declared principles of criticism altogether. Nor, in fact, did they entirely abandon them. Breitinger attempted to explain the character of the romances by reference to the needs of their customary readers. He pointed out that an educated man's idea of what is poetically probable differs from that of his ignorant neighbour, and continued :

"Daher liest der rohe und unwissende Pöbel gemeinlich die abenteuerlichsten Erzählungen von Hexen, Zauberern, weisen Frauen, Gespenstern und Romanen von irrenden Rittern."

(1)

Bodmer too attributed the taste for Spanish romances to a quite uncritical audience. This seems to provide the clue to the problem of their failure to understand this kind of poetry. It suggests that the cause was not so much lack of

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, p. 149.

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goodwill as lack of knowledge. Both Bodmer and Breitinger associated romances of chivalry with uneducated audiences of their own day, and not with the society for which they were originally composed. The historical background of mediaeval chivalry was perhaps hardly familiar enough to the early eighteenth century, for them to have perceived a link between the romances and a certain set of historical circumstances. Certainly the link was as yet by no means obvious, for the only known examples of romances of chivalry dating^{ed} from a later period, by which time they had of course degenerated.

In those parts of the major critical treatises so far examined, which are those concerned mainly with the content of poetry, no direct reference to MHG poetry appeared. However, the second part of the Critische Dichtkunst, which was devoted to a study of poetic diction, provided numerous references to the older German language, and at least one quotation from a MHG poem. This was due very largely to the fact that Bodmer had already made a close study of the peculiarities of the MHG language for his edition of the Richtebrief der Burger von Mürich, and was, therefore, considerably better versed in this than in any other aspect of the MHG period of literature.

In the course of his linguistic study, Bodmer had been struck by the likeness between the older German language and modern Swiss dialect, and also, it seems, by the intrinsic merit of the older language, though this was not mentioned

until later. Certainly the influence of both these considerations is apparent in his preface to the second part of the Critische Dichtkunst, where he discussed the importance of employing the resources of the various German dialects for the improvement of the standard language. Here he repeated the now familiar arguments to show that the different geographical conditions prevailing in the various parts of Germany had produced variations in language. In the light of these arguments it was obvious that some areas were favoured by nature than others would have a more pleasant language. He agreed with Gottsched that Saxony was one of these, in fact the chief, and found it only reasonable that the Saxon dialect should therefore be copied elsewhere. However, he made the reservation that even the best dialect can be improved, and pointed out that the chief source of improvement should be the other German dialects, many of which possessed excellent qualities unknown to the standard language. Of these qualities he singled out the capacity to preserve older words, many of which embodied unique shades of meaning. This he found to be particularly developed in the Swiss dialect. Moreover, its value in this instance was increased by the fact that the old Alemannic dialect was a particularly praiseworthy one and in many respects the equal of modern Saxon :

"Man kan in den Urkunden der alten allemannischen Nation eine solche Richtigkeit wahrnehmen, welche genugsam zeigt, dass es ihr an dem Natural dazu nicht gemangelt hat, woraus man schliessen dürfte, dass ihre Nachkommen, die in demselben Clima leben, zu einer gleichen Sprachrichtigkeit wenigstens von physicaelichen Ursachen nicht untüchtig gemacht werden. Die Erfahrung zeigt in der That, dass in andern Provinzen viele gute Wörter und geschickte Redensarten von altem Deutschen Herkommen behalten wurden, welche sich in Meissen verloren haben --- Die Wörter und Redensarten können sich an sich selbst mit bündigen Titeln schützen, es sey dass man sie in ihrem Ursprunge und Stamme, oder in ihren grammatischen Verfassungen, Zusammensetzung, oder in ihren Translationen und geschickten Bildern, die von alten Landesarten und Sitten hergenommen sind, oder in einem andern Licht betrachtet." (1)

Bodmer's remarks in the preface applied to the improvement of language in general. In the main body of the work Breitinger sought means of improving the poetic language in particular. This was for him an extremely important task, for the success of poetic reproductions of nature depended largely upon vividness of expression. Thought and expression were to him as soul and body.

He too, like Bodmer, stressed the importance of preserving old words deeply rooted in national character and embodying unique distinctions of meaning. Particularly valuable among these, were the words of metaphorical origin, which he termed "Machtwörter". These he found to possess;

"diejenigen figürlichen Bedeutungen, die durch einen langen Gebrauch in einer Sprache geläufig worden, dass man sie durchgehends für eigentliche Bedeutungen nimmt, weil man den Grund ihrer figürlichen Wendung verloren hat, oder aus der Acht setzt." (2)

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, II, p.5.b.

(2) Critische Dichtkunst, II, p.46.

Such words could clearly enrich the evocative power of poetic language to a high degree. For examples of them Breitingger looked chiefly to the seventeenth century. A passing reference to Homer's skill in using the many Greek dialects shows that the possibilities of dialect were not entirely forgotten but no examples from this source appeared, nor was there any attempt to trace examples of other kinds to specific older forms.

When he came to consider the general structure of language, Breitingger devoted a great deal of attention to the question of flexibility. This was a quality which he found to be particularly necessary, firstly for the expression of emotion, and secondly for translation from foreign languages (1). In both these instances rigid syntactical forms failed to meet the case, for the broken fitful language of emotion often dispensed with them altogether, and successful translation of foreign idioms also required a greater adaptability of expression. Breitingger's views were most fully developed in relation to this latter problem. In the section on the art of translation, he admitted the difficulties arising from the purely national character of idiomatic expression, but showed himself not so wholly convinced of their insuperability as some other writers had been. He thought that the task of translation could be eased if only the Germans could be made to appreciate the possibilities of their own language to the full.

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, II, 8 ter and ^{ter} Abschnitt.

Among the forms of expression which seemed to him to present the greatest difficulty to translators were freedom of word-order, ellipses and contractions, participial constructions and the use of infinitives and adjectives as nouns. Yet he possessed evidence that these were not entirely unknown in German. This was particularly true of participial constructions, which he found particularly apt to produce concise expression; and, moreover, their use in German could be justified by long precedent :

"Ich finde des Participium praesentis in dem Richte-brief der Stadt Zürich, einer Urkunde aus dem dreyzehnten Jahrhundert, wo es in einer seltsamen Zusammenfügung steht : Des erbs wartende sin : und, ob ioch er den win bes wurde gebende."(1)

He later defended another unfamiliar construction on the same lines as this :

"Die Construction der Adjectivorum in diesen Exempeln ist, wie ihr wohl sehet, eben dieselbe, welche wir oben in den Mittelwörtern der vergangenen Zeit wahrgenommen haben, als dass wir den Gebrauch der einen mit dem Gebrauch der andern rechtfertigen können. Wenn es nothwendig wäre, so könnten wir in den entferntesten Zeiten weisen. Ich finde gleich in dem Fragmente eines Heldengedichts, ungefähr aus dem dreyzehnten Saeculo

Vil worden Vursten hoch genant
Begunden sich da bringen

...

Ein Tal von blumen lichgefar
Lec dahi mit stete.

(1) Critische Dichtkunst, II, p. 147.

wo höchgemut so viel ist, als höchgemuthet; man hat noch in dem vorigen Saeculo gesagt: Sie ward gegen mir so wohlgemuthet ... und lichgefärbt ist was lichtgefärbt." (1)

The lines quoted here are from Konrad von Würzburg's Partenopier und Meliur, a fragment of which Bodmer had discovered in the Municipal Library in Zürich. (2) This was probably the same fragment as that to which he had referred in his letter to Gottsched of 28 March, 1735. (3)

The linguistic line of approach to the appreciation of older poetry was pursued further in 1742 in the Sammlung Critischer Schriften, in which was included a translation of two chapters of Mauvillon's Lettres Francoises et Germaniques on German language and literature. (4) Mauvillon pointed out that it was the practice of French poets to distinguish between the languages of poetry and prose. He showed that many of them had followed the example of La Fontaine, by adopting parts of the graceful poetic language of the sixteenth-century poet Marot, and by using its slightly archaic style to point the subtle distinction between poetic phantasy and prosaic solemnity.

Finally he suggested that the Germans might do well to adopt

(1) Critische Bibliothek, II, p. 151.

(2) Cp. Konrad v. Würzburg, Partenopier und Meliur, ed. Bartsch, Vienna 1871, lines 13271-2, 13410-1.

(3) Cp. *supra* p. 49.

(4) Sammlung critischer, poetischer und andern geistvollen Schriften, Zürich, 1741-1744, 5tes Stück, 1742, "Des Herrn von Mauvillon Brief von der Sprache und Poesie der Deutschen." Mauvillon's book was published in London in 1740.

a similar poetic style. Bodmer commented on this suggestion in a footnote, quoting a scornful letter from a correspondent in Schwabe's Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes, in which Marot was treated with contempt, and the ironical proposal was made, that the Germans had better concoct themselves a poetic language from the works of Hans Sachs and kindred rhymers. This he countered with a strong defence of Marot based first on historical grounds :

"Es ist eben so lächerlich, wenn er die marotische Sprache als altfränkisch und pöbelhaft anschwärzen will, als wenn er sich über die Hofleute Franciscus des Ersten erzornen wollte, dass sie nicht in der itzigen neumodischen Kleidung antreten. Die marotische Schreibart ist bey den Franzosen, diejenige, welche an dem Hofe des besagten Königs geredet worden."

Bodmer also justified the use of the "Marotic" style by modern poets, saying :

"Sie (die Sprache) war also bequemen scherzhafte und satirische Gedanken darinnen einzukleiden, und Marot hatte sie zu diesem Ende so geschickt gebraucht, dass sie als eine todte Sprache noch heutzutage in seinen Schriften erleret und zu demselben Ende angewendet wird. Sofern ist es, dass diese Sprache, pöbelhaft sey, oder wider die Grammatick verstosse, wiewohl sie ihre eigene Grammatick hat."

While Bodmer agreed in principle that the Germans required a poetic style of this kind, he made no suggestion as to how it should be achieved. Obviously it had not yet occurred to him that mediaeval German might serve the same purpose as Marot's sixteenth-century French.

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 5tes Stück, p.50, footnote.

IV

Although there were by now a number of tendencies in Bodmer's poetic theory, which favoured the growth of interest in MHG poetry, there was as yet no indication that Bodmer intended to concern himself very deeply with the subject. His omission to do so may be attributed partly to lack of knowledge but he certainly knew at least two examples of MHG poetry quite well, for he had used the Winsbekin in his Character der Teutschen Gedichte and he had also studied the fragment of Partonopiet und Meliur. It seems, therefore, that another explanation must be sought. This is to be found perhaps in the motive which underlay all Bodmer's concern with poetic theory and literary history, namely his desire to discover means of improving the poetry of his own day. This would lead him to illustrate his theories by only those works best suited to further that end. Dante and Homer came into this category, for Dante excelled in poetic description, and Homer was not only an acknowledged master of poetic invention, but also reflected by means of his art a natural state of society. Thus the reason for Bodmer's apparent neglect of MHG poetry would seem to be that he was not yet fully convinced that it could contribute significantly to the solution of his immediate problems. Only when this conviction was established, would he feel justified in devoting the whole of his

attention to the older period of poetry. In fact it was not long before a decisive step in this direction was taken.

The stage of development reached in 1742, had something of the character of that reached in the earlier period between 1721 and 1724, when Bodmer was on the brink of discovering that primitive poetry might fulfil his poetic ideal. Then the issue was decided by Addison's essays on ballad poetry. Now Bodmer was on the verge of another discovery: that MHC poetry too could be regarded as an example of natural poetry; and again, the work of an English writer enabled him to crystallize his thoughts. In this instance, the writer was Thomas Blackwell, professor of Greek at Aberdeen from 1723 - 1757. Blackwell, who was a great admirer of Shaftesbury, was among the first to develop the theories of natural poetry and language, which were to be widely accepted in the later eighteenth century. (1) Moreover, the fact that they did become general then, was largely due to his influence, for among their chief exponents were his pupils James Burnet (Lord Monboddo) and James Beatty, and also James Macpherson, who, though not

(1) Cp. Lois Whitney, "Thomas Blackwell, a disciple of Shaftesbury, Philological Quarterly, vol. v. (Iowa, 1926.)

actually his pupil, came within his circle at Aberdeen.(1)

In 1735 Blackwell published anonymously his Enquiry⁽²⁾
into the Life and Writings of Homer. The exact circum-
 stances of Bodmer's first acquaintance with this work are
 obscure, but it is possible that his interest or that of
 one of his friends was aroused by an article in the
Bibliothèque Britannique, published at the Hague in 1735
 and 1736, in which the contents of the Enquiry were summar-
 ized.⁽³⁾ The fact that many of the opinions expressed by
 Bodmer in the Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen
Gemälde der Dichter are also to be found in Blackwell's

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- (1) Cp. Lois Whitney, "English Primitivistic Theories of Epic Origins", Modern Philology, vol. XXI, No.4 (Chicago, 1924)
 - (2) Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, London, 1735.
 - (3) Bibliothèque Britannique, ou Historie des Ouvrages des
Écrivains de la Grande Bretagne. A la Haye, Tome V, art IX
 (1735) pp. 388 sqq; Tome VI, art VI (1736), pp. 349 sqq.

The only references to Blackwell's book I have been able to trace in German literature of the ^{first fifty years of the} eighteenth century, apart from those made by Bodmer, are:

- 1) Neuer Büchersaal der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste, Leipzig, 1746, II Bd, 2tes Stück, pp. 114 sqq; 3tes Stück pp. 108 sqq. (a lengthy summary of the contents of the Enquiry by Frau Gotteched.)
- 2) F. v. Hagedorn, Oden und Lieder, Hamburg, 1747, p.XXXI (a quotation of a few words.)

book, gives no sure proof that Bodmer drew on it as early as 1741, for most of those opinions could equally well have been derived from common sources. However, it is certain that the acquaintance must date from a time very little later, for in 1743 there appeared in the Sammlung Critischer Schriften an essay entitled,

"Von dem wichtigen Antheil, den das Glück beytragen muss einen epischen Poeten zu formiren. Nach den Grundsätzen des Enquiry into the Life (sic) and writings of Homer." (1)

This consists of a number of passages translated literally from the first, third, fourth, sixth and eighth sections of Blackwell's book.

Blackwell's aim was to find an explanation for the unique genius of Homer. He approached his task historically, examining a "Concourse of natural causes" which

"conspired to cultivate that mighty Genius, and gave him the noblest Field to exercise it in, that ever fell to the share of a Poet." (2)

These he considered under the three headings of climate, the general state of civilization and the personal circumstances of the poet. Much of his material was drawn from the Iliad and the Odyssey, for he assumed that Homer had taken the best model for his work, namely the Manners, (3) whose originals he has practised and known.

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- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 1 sqq.
 - (2) Enquiry, ed. cit. p.4.
 - (3) Enquiry, ed. cit., p.29.

Blackwell's remarks on the influence of climate were conventional and brief. They were followed by an enquiry into the manners, religion, learning and language of the period. For Blackwell the most remarkable characteristic of the manners of Homeric society was their naturalness, a naturalness which he equaled with virtue. His conception of this is well put in a paragraph which Bodmer translates as follows:

"Die Wichtigkeit dieses Glückes wird am besten erhellen, wenn wir die Lust betrachten, die von den Vorstellungen natürlicher und einfältiger Sitten entspringet. . . Dieselben zeigen uns die Bedürfnisse und Empfindungen des Menschen am deutlichsten. Sie geben uns das, was ein unverstelltes Gemüthe bewegt, und die Wege, die es braucht sich zu vergnügen, aufrichtig heim. Güte und Ehrlichkeit haben an diesem Ergetzen ihren Antheil, denn wir legen eine Liebe an diese Leute und haben Lieber mit ihnen zu schaffen als mit spitzfindigen oder zweyzüngigen Charakteren. . . Unschuld, sagen wir, ist schön; die Abrisse derselben können nicht anders als entzücken. Zeugen dessen sind Züge von dieser Art in Drydens Eroberung Mexicos, und der bezauberten Insel." (1)

Blackwell here accepted in the main the idea of the nature of simple societies, which had sprung up as a result of the combination of recollections of the ancient ideal of a Golden Age with the knowledge of primitive communities afforded by modern traveller's tales. However, he did not reproduce it entirely without modification

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp.8 - 9
Op. Enquiry . ed. cit., p.29 "The importance of this good fortune."

for the kind of society he depicts in the Enquiry is not altogether primitive, but rather one in which the transition from barbarism to civilisation is being made. He found such times of transition particularly favourable to poetry, since they produce unusual and stirring events, which rouse the poet's imagination and provide the best material, especially for poems of the epic kind.

"Aber wann durch einen Landesüberfall oder Eroberung und Bezwungung die Gestalt der Dinge ganz und gar verkehret; oder wenn die Ureinwohner und ersten Anbauer eines Landes mittelst Policey und guter Verfassungen aus einem Stande der Unwissenheit und Barbarei zu Reichtum und Macht gelangen, als dann werden die Stufen des Anwachsens merklich; wir können dann alle Dinge im Wachsen sehen, gestalt der Genius und die Seele selbst eines Volkes sich zu höhern Dingen, und einer edlern Art der Sitten erhebet. Es ist ein Glück für einen Poeten in diesen Zeiten geböhren zu seyn. Er sieht dann Städte geplündert, die Männer durch das Schwert fallen, und die Weiber zu Sklavinnen gemacht. Er sieht ihre hoffnungslosen Angesichter und flehender Stellungen, höret der Trauern über ihre erschlagenen Männer, und ihre Bitten für ihre Kinder. Er sieht ferner Städte, die mit Frieden gesegnet, und von der Freiheit belebet sind, die starke Commerzien treiben und an Reichtum zunehmen."(1)

All these qualities were lost with the coming of civilization, and thereafter they could be restored only if unnatural bonds were disrupted by violent means, as in the event of civil war..

Blackwell envisaged language as a reflection of the character of the society it serves, and therefore assumed,

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 7 - 8, cp. Enquiry ed. cit., pp. 14 and 23.

that the speech of the natural society he had described, would be quite spontaneous, highly emotional and full of imaginative metaphors:

"Das Leben der Alten war den Zufällen und der Gefahr weit mehr unterworfen, eh' und bevor noch Städte gebauet, und die Menschen durch bürgerliche Gesellschaften beschirmt waren. Folglich muss ihre Rede gantz affektsvoll und metaphorisch gewesen seyn, jedoch gantz natürlich; bequem die höchsten Leidenschaften auszudrücken, und von den empfindlichsten Sachen, welche in einem einsamen wilden Leben vorkommen, hergenommen." (1)

During the period of transition to early civilization such a language would acquire just sufficient polish to fit it for poetic uses, without losing its naturally vivid and figurative qualities. Moreover, at this period, the sources of new metaphors would not have dried up, for the customs and religiousⁿ of early civilizations had a picturesqueness and a tendency to allegory which were bound to leave their mark on language. Early forms of popular government also played a part in the enrichment of language, by providing frequent opportunities for the exercise of rhetorical gifts; and the numerous dialects, in which the many independent communities of Greece expressed themselves, gave an opportunity to introduce variety into speech, which Homer did not neglect.

In considering the third factor in environment, that of the individual circumstances of the poet's life, Blackwell concentrated on one particular aspect, namely

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, p. 16, cp. Enquiry, ed. cit. p. 39.

Homer's life as a wandering bard. He showed that travel, which revealed so many strange aspects of nature and human life, must have been a powerful stimulus to Homer's imagination. He thought too, that constant changes of audience must have made the poet quick to detect the needs of his listeners, and have enabled him to cultivate that effortless skill which made it possible for him to sing impromptu.

Bodmer certainly found no difficulty in subscribing to those of Blackwell's views which he chose to reproduce in the Sammlung Critischer Schriften, for most of them had already been put forward in one form or another in his own work. There was, however, one highly significant point in Blackwell's argument, the implications of which Bodmer had not fully realized before. This was the point of the importance to poetry, in particular of periods of rapid social change, such as civil war, or the transition from barbarism to civilization. The importance of such periods in the life of society in general had been noticed in an article in the Helvetische Bibliothek, where Bodmer quoted a remark made by Montesquieu in the Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains, to the effect that no nation is so dangerous to its neighbours as when it is torn by civil strife, since in such times, men discover powers which lie dormant in normally peaceful circumstances. ⁽¹⁾ Moreover, an instance

(1) Cp. Helvetische Bibliothek, vol. I., pp. 150 - 151.

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of such a period in the history of mediaeval Germany was given by the Richtebrief der Bürger von Zürich, in the preface to which Bodmer had pointed out that the admirable social organization revealed by that document had been created in the face of frequent and powerful enemy attacks (1) It therefore only remained for him to draw the final conclusion, that since the troubled society of Homer's day had produced great poetry, the troubled society of mediaeval Germany might also be expected to do so. Blackwell perhaps helped to establish the link by means of a passage in the Enquiry, in which he likened Homeric Greece to Italy at the time of Dante, showing that Dante like Homer was the product of a period of social unrest: this passage was translated by Bodmer, as follows:

"In dergleichen Zeiten, da Italien so wohl als Deutschland in Partheyen zertheilet war, da die kleinen Staaten gegen einander ligirt waren, mitten in den hitzigsten Streiten und Blutvergiessungen, schrieb Dantes den nachdrücklichten Entwurf und Abriss von den Menschen und ihren Neigungen und Leiden-schaften." (2)

Whatever the immediate cause, the link was certainly forged in Bodmer's mind, for in the same year, 1743, he published the essay "Von den vortrefflichen Umständen für die Poesie unter den Kaisern aus dem schwäbischen Hause", in which he sought to prove that the Hohenstaufen era had provided ideal conditions for poetry. (3)

(1) Cp. Helvetische Bibliothek, vol. 2, pp. 5 - 6.

(2) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 29; Enquiry, ed. cit., p. 65.

(3) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 25 sqq.

He began with a description of the main characteristics of the period, in which he frequently borrowed appropriate passages from Blackwell. Such a borrowing occurred in the opening paragraph:

"Ein gelehrter Mann (Blackwell), dem die Stafeln, nach welchen die Literatur gestiegen, wohl bekannt gewesen, hat in Acht genommen, dass die Zeiten, da Freyheit und Sklaverey mit einander gestritten, der Welt etwas vortreffliches von Werken des Geistes geliefert haben. In dergleichen Zeiten geben die Leute sich durchaus zu erkennen, das menschliche Geschlecht ist dann gewissen indianischen Federn gleich welche sich in mehr als einem Lichte zu ihrem Vortheil zeigen. Die Verwirrungen und Gefährlichkeiten, die in solchen Umständen häufig sind, setzen alle Leidenschaften in Bewegung, und kehren sie in allen möglichen Gestalten. Wenn diese moralischen Stellungen denn wohl in acht genommen werden, müssen vortreffliche Werke daraus werden." (1)

After a few more general remarks on these lines, he continues:

"Diese Betrachtungen und andere haben mich die beste Hoffnung von den Scribenten, welche unter den Kaisern aus dem schwäbischen Hause gelebet haben, fassen heissen. Damahls that die deutsche Freyheit ihr äusserstes, sich des slavischen Jochs zu entschüttern, das ihr von Rom angedrohet war. Die deutschen waren nicht mehr diese rohen und halbwilden, die aller Gemächlichkeiten des Lebens, und politischer Veranstaltungen beraubt waren. Sie hatten friedliche Zeiten zwischen langen und zweiträchtigen Versuchen gehabt, wo sie es in den Künsten und Wissenschaften auf einen gewissen Grad gebracht hatten. Doch waren sie von Zucht Höflichkeit und Cerimoniel nicht zu enge eingethan. Sie hatten noch vieles von ihrem unbändigen Geist behalten, und die Schranken der Religion oder die Policy hatten die natürlichen und einfältigen Bewegungen ihres Hertzens nicht eingezwängt." (2)

(1) Sammlung critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 25
cp. Enquiry, ed. cit. pp. 63 - 64.

(2) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 26.

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In his conjectures as to the nature of the language of the period, Bodmer again followed the line of Blackwell's argument, sometimes repeating his very words.

"Es kan nicht seyn, dass dieser Character, diese Empfindungen und Regungen nicht in ihre Sprache und Schriften eingeflossen seyn. Ihre Sprache muss von ihnen dahin gebracht worden seyn, dass sie diese starken und tapfermüthigen Fühlungen darinnen haben ausdrücken können. Die Erbauung so vieler Städte und die besonderen Regierungen in denselben, welche mit dem Regimente so vieler kleinen Fürsten und Grafen, die zwar anderer Vasallen waren, doch wieder ihre Unterthanen hatten, so seltsam absetzten, die Notwendigkeit der Arbeit, die Einführung der Handwerke und der Kaufmannschaft, mussten eine reiche und nachdrückliche Sprache mit sich gebracht haben. Die Rathsversammlungen eines freyen Staates werden durch das Mittel der Rede geführt, wohin man will, dieses bringt die Beredsamkeit ins Aufnehmen, und die Kunst, andere auf seine Meinung zu führen, in Werth. Wo die Gedanken stark und ehrliebend sind, fehlt es nicht das sie bequeme Worte an die Hand geben, womit man sie ohne Abbruch ausdrücken könne.

Indessen war diese Sprache nicht so sehr auspoliert dass sie dadurch wäre abgeschliffen und geschwachtet worden." (1)

Bodmer assumed that the combination of the manners and the language he had described could not fail to encourage the composition of poetry which would be excellent both in form and :

"Die Poesie beruhet insonderheit auf den Sitten der Menschen, die dann sind, da man schreibt: die besten Poeten copieren die Natur, und liefern sie uns, wie sie solche finden. Ein Scribent von Friedrichs des I. oder II. Zeiten habe nur mit der damaligen Sprache geschildert, was er gesehen und empfunden, so muss sein Werk anmuthig und nachdrücklich seyn. Sein Vorstellung einfältiger und natürlicher Sitten wird uns einnehmen, sie wird uns das Bedürfnis und die Empfindungen der Menschen zeigen, sie wird uns die Bewegungen

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 27 - 28
Cp. Enquiry, ed. cit., pp. 45 and 58 - 9.

eines unverstellten Gemüthes vorweisen. . ."(1)

His confidence was strengthened further when he turned from the general characteristics of twelfth century society to examine the particular conditions under which poets lived. He found to his delight that they, like Homer, were wandering singers:

"Die Nachrichten von diesen deutschen Sängern geben, dass sie in dem Lande herumreiseten, und hier und da an grossen Höfen ihre Erfindungen vorlasen und vorsangen." (2)

These singers, who, as Bodmer assured his readers, had no connection with the later Meistersinger, were held in such honour that even princes and noblemen were not ashamed to practise their art:

"Meine Hoffnung zu den poetischen Schriften dieser Zeiten hat noch einen absonderlichen Grund in der Gewohnheit derselben, welche die Poesie zu einer Profession gemacht, und zwar zu einer solchen, welche sich Freyherrn, Fürsten, und Grafen, vor keine Schande hielten, in dem sie nicht nur dieselbe schützten, und die Poeten in ihre Schlösser und Gastgeböthe aufnahmen, Wettstreite unter ihnen anstellten, sie ihre Werke öffentlich in Gegenwart der vornehmsten Gesellschaft von beyderley Geschlechtern vorlesen liessen, sondern sich selber darum bemüheten, und um den Preiss sangen. Eine Gewohnheit, die sie vielleicht eben aus Sicilien, wo die Trovadori unter den neuern die frühesten gewesen,

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- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 28 - 29f
 - (2) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 31.
 - (3) Cp. Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 36:
 "Man muss nicht wohl zu unterscheiden wissen, wenn man die Poeten desselben Alters mit den Meistersängern der späteren Zeit in eine Classe setzt; wie Wagenseil und andere gethan haben. Sie sind einander an Kunst und Sprache, allzu ungleich, wiewohl sie einander darinnen gleichen mögen, dass diese und jene ihre Erzählungen vor einer Gesellschaft Zuhörer abgesungen haben."

die zur Poesie ein natürliches Geschick gewiesen, herüber gehohlet haben. Friedrich der II. war selbst ein grosser Liebhaber der Poesie, und man hat noch auf diesen Tag einige von seinen Gedanken, welche er in der Italienischen Sprache ausgebildet hat.

(1)

Bodmer found too that this highly favoured generation of poets enjoyed the further advantage of being able to travel beyond the borders of Germany, to Sicily, which was part of the Hohenstaufe domain, and to Palestine during the Crusades:

- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 30.

Blackwell had referred to the "Trovadores or Troubadours of Provence" as "the earliest of the moderns that shewed any vein for poetry". (Cp. Enquiry, ed. cit. p. 112) It is therefore interesting that Bodmer gave priority to the Sicilians. Older German literary historians had compared the antiquity of German poetry with that of Provencal poetry only (cp. D.G. Morhof, Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache etc. ed. cit., pp. 320 sqq) Of the Italian critics whose work Bodmer knew, Gravina upheld the claims of Provence, but Muratori supported Sicily (cp. G. V. Gravina Della Ragion Poetica, ed. cit. pp. 150 sqq and L. Muratori Della Perfetta Poesia Italiana, pp. 6 sqq.) It therefore seems likely that Bodmer was influenced by Muratori, and that his knowledge of Frederick II.'s poems was drawn from a collection mentioned by him. That Bodmer possessed this collection or acquired it soon after is shown by a letter to Hagedorn of 16th April 1745 (see Hagedorn's Poetische Werke, Hamburg, 1800, V. Theil, p. 192) "Ich besitze einen Band Sonetti e Canzoni di diversi antichi Autori Toscani, in dieci libri vaccolti. (Firenze, 1527), (edited by B. di Giunta) worin nicht wenige Gesänge enthalten sind, die vor des Dantes Zeiten geschrieben worden. Darunter sind ein Paar von Kaiser Friedrich II. selbst. Das Metrum in denselben, die Denkensart, der Schwung sind den Liedern die ich aus der Pariser Handschrift habe, allerdings ähnlich, und bringen mich gänzlich auf den Gedanken, dass die damalige deutsche Poesie sich die sicilianische zum Muster genommen habe."

"Dieselben Zeiten hatten für einen Poeten auch das Glück, dass einer viele Reisen machen konnte, die Kreuzzüge in die orientalischen Ländern gaben ihm dazu häufige Gelegenheit und er konnte auf denselben seine Phantasie mit einer wunderbaren Mannigfaltigkeit von Sitten, Manieren, Religionen etc, welche mit seiner eigenen so stark abstachen, bereichern. Die Natur musste ihm von diesen Dingen, die sie ihm in ihrer Würcklichkeit vor Augen stellte, die lebhafteste Empfindung geben.

Und weil ein grosser Theil Italiens nebst dem angenehmen und fruchtbaren Sicilien damahls unter der Herrschaft des schwäbischen Stammes stuhnd, so dass die Deutschen in dasselbe als in ihr eigenes Land öftere Reisen thaten, so können wir natürlicherweise vermuthen, dass diese gemässigten Landschaften, die unter dem gütigen Einfluss eines freudigen Himmels liegen der Deutschen martialischen Geister einiger-massen besänftiget, und mit den leckeren Früchten ihrer Felder und Gärten den Geschmack der Wollust verbessert, jedoch nicht verzärtelt haben." (1)

Thus it was established that the circumstances of the Hohenstaufen era in Germany were such as might be expected to foster poetry as great as that produced in Homeric Greece. It now remained to examine the poetry which had been preserved in order to discover whether it was in fact as excellent as was anticipated.

Bodmer began the second part of his essay with a lament for the loss of many assuredly excellent works:

"Hätten wir noch Hermanns von Sachsenhausen Gedicht die *Mün* genannt, Wolframs von Eschilbach starken Rennewart, desgleichen was er von Gamuret und seinem Sohne Parcifall geschrieben; hätten wir vornehmlich Klinsors Gedichte von der Erschaffung, den Geschöpfen dem Gestirne und desselben Histörgeu und Erzählungen, so würden wir mein Vertrauen zu ihnen

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 29 - 30.

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Zeiten und ihrer Geschicklichkeit in voller Kraft
erfüllet sehen." (1)

The choice of these examples was not altogether arbitrary. The poem Character der teutschen Gedichte shows that the mysterious figure of Klingsohr had early captured Bodmer's imagination. (2) Wolfram von Eschenbach, Klingsohr's opponent in the Wartburgkrieg was clearly also an important poet, and perhaps gained importance in Bodmer's eyes on the strength of Spangenberg's assertion that he was of Swiss birth. (3) Hermann von Sachsenheim's poem was probably mentioned because Goldast's comments in the Paraenetici show that Wolfram's hero, Gammet, played a part in it. (4)

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- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p.33. Hermann von Sachsenheim's poem was mentioned by Goldast (Paraenetici, ed. cit. p.401) The form of his name "Sachsenhausen" given by Bodmer appears to be a slip, since Goldast has "Sachsenheim". The names of Wolfram's and Klingsohr's poems came originally from Spangenberg (Von der Musica, ed. cit. pp. 121 - 22.) and were probably known to Bodmer through J. C. Wagenseil's Von der Meistersinger holdseligen Kunst, (ed. cit. p.510). It is interesting that both Spangenberg and Wagenseil give Wolfram's name as "von Eschenbach", while Goldast has "von Eschilbach", (cp. Paraenetici, ed. cit. p.352 and p. 362), the form which Bodmer chose.
- (2) Cp. supra p.48
- (3) Cp. Von der Musica, ed. cit. p. 121. Wagenseil, op. cit. p. 510.
- (4) Paraenetici, ed. cit. pp. 400 - 401.

The loss of these poems was offset to some extent by the survival of a number of others. However, the value of these varied considerably. Some were preserved only in versions made by fifteenth-century poets and had lost too much of their original character to be judged in that form: no trace was found in the municipal library in Zurich.

"Wir haben noch etwas von Eschelbach, von Albrecht von Halberstatt, von Oftertingen, von Freydank, das in dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert im öffentlichen Druck das Licht gesehen hat, aber die Herausgeber haben in den Lesarten, den Wörtern und ganzen Redensarten so wichtige Veränderungen vorgenommen, dass wir die Sprache und die echten Gedanken der Originale öfters darinnen vermissen." (1)

... hat, so ungeschmackvolle Originale von den eigentlichen und ursprünglichen Sitten der damaligen Deutschen, und diese werden mit einer solchen Art und Kraft der Redensart, sowohl durch Metaphern von den natürlichsten Gegenständen, als durch einer glücklichen Schatz der Sprache, ausgedrückt, dass wir gegungen daraus erkennen, dass der Charakter der damaligen Zeiten und Umstände eine Färbung seiner Natur gemessen geben, und sich in die Schriften ergossen habe." (2)

The fragment of epic poetry made an equally favourable impression. The story, so far as Bodmer could tell, was

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 33.

... the Sultan of Persia and took place in Palestine at the time of the Crusades. He demonstrated its quality by a long quotation in which the preparations for a tournament between Saracens and Christians were described, and commented further:

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 34.
 (2) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 33 - 46.
 The lines quoted by Bodmer are: 13267-13299; 13305-13337; 13343-13375; 13381-13413; 14017-14059; 14065-14096; 14141-14172. Cf. Bartsch's edition Vienna, 1871.

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The most authentic survivals of which Bodmer could claim knowledge at this time were the three didactic poems in Goldast's Paraenetici; the anonymous fragment of epic poetry, which he had first mentioned to Gottsched in 1735, and a MS containing a collection of fables, which had also been found in the municipal library in Zürich. In these he finally discovered evidence of the excellence of twelfth century German poetry.

Of the poems edited by Goldast, he said:

"Wir finden theils in denselbigen, theils in einzelnen Zeilen, welche Goldast hier und da ausgezogen hat, so ungekünstelte Originale von den eigenen und ursprünglichen Sitten der damaligen Deutschen, und diese werden mit einer solchen Art und Kraft der Redensart, sowohl durch Metaphern von den natürlichsten Gegenständen, als durch einer glücklichen Schatz der Sprache, ausgedrückt, dass wir genugsam daraus erkennen, dass der Charakter der damaligen Zeiten und Umstände eine Wirkung seiner Natur gemäss getan, und sich in die Schriften ergossen habe." (1)

The fragment of epic poetry made an equally favourable impression. The story, so far as Bodmer could tell, was of the wooing of the beautiful Meliur and the Sultan of Persia and took place in Palestine at the time of the Crusades. He demonstrated its quality by a long quotation in which the preparations for a tournament between Saraceus and Christians were described, and commented further:

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 34.

(2) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 38 - 46.

The lines quoted by Bodmer are: 13267-13299; 13305-13337; 13343-13375; 1338-13413; 14027-14059; 14065-14096; 14141-14172 of Bartsch's edition Vienna, 1871.

"Wir haben schon darinnen Erfindung, Sitten und poetische Farben; Erfindung in Meliurens Worte, einen von den Christlichen Sarazenischen Fürsten zum Gemahl zu erwehlen, welches eine Aehnlichkeit mit Penelopens Versprechen hat, . . . in der freundschaftlichen Vermischung der Sarazenen und der Christen, welche etwas neues und seltsames in sich hat, Sitten haben wir in eben dieser Vermischung. . Poetische Farben finden sich in der Beschreibung der Gegenden, der Zurüstungen, der Eintheilung des Turniers." (1)

Bodmer attributed the collection of fables to a rather later period than the other poems, to the reign of Rudolf I. of Habsburg, but found that they nevertheless shared many of the excellent qualities of the earlier poetry, and commended them particularly to his contemporaries^{an} who were developing a lively interest in this kind of poetry. Again he illustrated his point by quotations, in this instance from the fables of the dog and his shadow, and (2) of the widow of Ephesus.

"Die Sprache zur Ausdrückung aller dieser Dinge fehlte nicht, und wann wir sie als eine fremde oder gar als eine todte Sprache ansehen, und die Begriffe mit den Wortern verknüpfen, welche zur Zeit, als sie noch geredet war, damit verknüpfet waren, so werden wir keinen schlechten Geschmack darinnen finden." (3)

Here was a further development of the idea, which had been implicit in the linguistic study of the Richtebrief der Bürger von Zürich, that the older language must be

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- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 37.
 - (2) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, pp. 48. sqq.
 - (3) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 37.

interpreted in its own terms. Bodmer stressed the integrity of the MHG language, showing that it was as complete a form of expression as any dead or foreign language, and was therefore equally immune from condemnation by modern German standards. Indeed he found that the older language possessed peculiar virtues, which modern German lacked:

"Wer es probieren wollte, dieses Ueberbleibsel in unsere Sprache zu übersetzen, würde die Trefflichkeit der Grundsprache bald an der Mühe erkennen, welche er haben würde, die Begriffe eben so kurtz, so natürlich und geschickt, ohne Mattigkeit und ohne Niedrigkeit, zu geben." (1)

This defence of the older language followed a line very similar to that which Bodmer had taken on behalf of the older French used by Clément Marot; and he now finally took the step of suggesting, that German poets might learn from the MHG language, as the French had learned from the "style marotique". The subject was raised in the course of the discussion of the collection of old fables, when Bodmer found opportunity to refer to La Fontaine's use of Marot's language:

"Man weiss, was vor eine zärtliche Furcht die Franzosen vor ungewöhnlichen Wörtern haben, welche entweder zu neu oder aus der Mode sind; nichtsdestoweniger haben sie es La Fontaine verziehen, dass er Marots veraltete Sprache in der Erzählung seiner Fabeln und Märchen angebracht hat, wo er es mit Artigkeit hat thun können. . . Wenn meine Landsleute in die Gemuthsverfassung kämen, für den artigen Scherz

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 38.

gleichermaßen eine besondere Sprache einzuführen, so könnten sie in diesen alten Fabeln schon eine ziemliche Anzahl geschickter Wörter und Ausdrücke zu diesem Ende finden." (1)

The cursoriness of Bodmer's account of MHG verse form reflected his general indifference to this aspect of poetry. He merely quoted six lines ^{quoted by Goldast} ~~from the "Winsbake"~~ with the comment that the metre would lend itself easily to adaptation to modern use. (2) No attempt was made to analyse the character of the metre, nor to explain precisely how a modern poet could adapt it to his purposes. Nevertheless this passage of the essay is not entirely uninteresting, for in it Bodmer took the opportunity to refer to the esteem in which the English held their older poetry. He approached the subject by pointing out a likeness between the metre of the ^{lines of MHG poetry} ~~"Winsbake"~~ and that of some lines by Chaucer:

"Das Metrum ist demjenigen ganz gleich, welches der Englische Schaser noch in dem 14ten Saeculo gebraucht hat, da uns aber verborgen ist, wie man es gelesen oder gesungen hat. Schaser schreibt zum Exempel:

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- (1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, p. 52.
 (2) Cp. Sammlung Critischer Schriften, p. 47. The lines quoted are:
 "Swas si redent, ich bin dir holt,
 Und nem din glésin vingerlin fûr einer kuneginne golt.
 Leb du in tugentlicher Aht
 Und las den kranken also leben, als im von Arte ist geslaht
 Gut das ist Gîtikeit ein Klobe u.
 Denn es ist lieber denne Got und weltlich ere, ich wen er tobe.
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"It stood upon so high a rock,
Higher standeth none in Spayne,
What manner stone this rock was
For it was like lymed glass
But that it schon full more clere
But of what congealed matere
It was, I niste readily."

Die Engelländer haben sich von diesem Sylbenmasse nicht ihre machen lassen, dass sie den Inhalt und die Erfindungen darunter aus dem Gesichte verlohren hätten, ihre heutigen Poeten finden noch iezo die Perlen darinnen, und wissen sie geschickt herauszunehmen. Sie halten Schasers poetisches Naturel noch iezo in Hochachtung, da sie seine Sprache haben untergehen lassen. (1)

This passage shows that Bodmer knew something of the modern versions of Chaucer produced by contemporary English poets, and more especially of those produced by Pope, for the seven lines he quoted from Chaucer's House of Fame appeared in a footnote to Pope's The Temple of Fame in the edition of his collected works published in 1736. This same edition also contained Pope's versions of The Merchant's Tale and The Wife of Bath's Tale.⁽²⁾

In the essay of 1743, Bodmer's new theories of social and literary development were applied to the body of information about MHG poetry gathered by older scholars and literary historians in such a way that an entirely new

(1) Sammlung Critischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p. 47.

(2) Cp. The Works of Alexander Pope, London, 1736, vol IV p. 5.

The fact that Bodmer had Chaucer's name before him in this edition makes it likely that his version of it, "Schaser", was produced merely to facilitate its pronunciation by his readers.

appreciation of it became possible. For Bodmer, at least, MHG poetry was no longer the object of merely historical and patriotic interest: instead it had become the embodiment of a poetic ideal. This was the climax of the early period of Bodmer's work. He now set himself with the greatest enthusiasm to the task of finding more evidence to support his case and of inspiring others with his own conviction of its justice.

in Zurich. A little later, certainly before 1743, a paper MS containing MHG fables was found in this same library. (1) However, it was not until 1743, when Bodmer was finally convinced of the value of MHG poetry, that his search for MHG began in real earnest. Thenceforward he pursued it with remarkable energy and perseverance, fostered not only by the knowledge of the importance of his task, but also by his naturally lively curiosity which could now be given free rein. He set forth much as an explorer of unknown lands, finding a delight in discovery which he later described in "Mein postiches Leben" as "wie das Entdecken der neuen Welt- theile. (2)

Although Bodmer had as yet little knowledge by which to direct his researches, his immediate course was clear. The first essential was to find out more about the MS in Paris

(1) Cp. *supra* pp. 49⁵ and 88.
 (2) Bodmers *Postiches Leben*, ed. cit. p. 49

II. The discovery and publication of MHG texts.

Already in the early period of his work Bodmer had shown some anxiety to bring unknown MHG poems to light. In a letter to Gottsched written in 1735 he had suggested efforts to obtain at least a copy of the MS in the Royal Library in Paris, and gave news of his own discovery of a fragment of Conrad von Würzburg's Partenopier und Meliur in the Stadtbibliothek in Zürich. A little later, certainly before 1743, a paper MS containing MHG fables was found in this same library. (1)

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(1) Cp. supra pp. 49 and 83.

(2) Bodmers Persönliche Anekdoten, ed.cit. p.40

from which it seemed likely that Goldast had drawn his material.

At the very outset of his investigations Bodmer adopted the characteristic method of making the most of every contact, a method which was always to serve him well. His position during the 1740's was particularly favourable, for he was then at the height of his influence, and his acquaintance in many circles was rapidly widening. Young admirers were emboldened to write to him. For example, in 1742 he entered into correspondence with one G.E. Schneider, secretary to the Count of Erbach-Schöenberg near Heidelberg. By May 1743, plans were afoot between them to take advantage of the presence of many important French officers in Heidelberg, in order to find support in approaching the French authorities about the MS in Paris (1). Unfortunately the plan failed, and the correspondence petered out, but meanwhile Bodmer had made a more promising acquaintance in another sphere of activity.

In the spring of 1744 he was visited in Zürich by J.D. Schoepflin, Professor of History in Strassburg. Schoepflin was himself an enthusiastic student of German antiquities and moreover the friend of J.G. Scherz and of J.C. Bertenstein, who had copied the extracts from the Paris MS, which Scherz

(1) Cp. "Briefe von Schoepflin und andern Strassburger Gelehrten an Bodmer und Breitinger", Strassburger Studien, ed. Martin und Weigand, vol. II, (Strassburg, 1884) pp. 444-6.

used in Schilter's Thesaurus. He also possessed considerable influence at the French court. On his return to Strassburg in September, Schoepflin rewarded the hospitality he had enjoyed in Zürich by sending Bodmer Bartenstein's copy of the poems of Kaiser Heinrich and Koenig Konrad. (1) Then in January 1745 the remainder of the copies in Scherz' possession were sent, together with a letter in which Schoepflin promised to make enquiries in Paris about the original codex. In this same letter he mentioned also that a similar MS. was said to be preserved in Bremen. (2)

Bodmer lost no time in verifying this latter report. As before, he had first to find a suitable contact, this time in North Germany. His choice fell upon the poet Hagedorn in Hamburg, with whom he had corresponded since 1742. It is significant that here for the first time Bodmer sought to enlist the aid of a poet in his researches. In the preliminary stages this was bound to be more difficult than securing the interest of an antiquarian scholar such as Schoepflin, who was already familiar with such studies. It called for a very different method of approach. However, this did not deter Bodmer, who was after all mainly interested in fostering a poetic approach to MHO poetry. The subject seems to have been raised with

(1) Strassburger Studien, II. p.455, letter of 16 Sep.1744.

(2) Strassburger Studien, II, p.458, letter of 2 Jan.1745.

Hagedorn for the first time in January 1745, and thenceforth Bodmer's letters to him contained enthusiastic accounts of the poetic qualities of MHG poetry and were accompanied by samples of it, in which he professed to find a natural grace akin to that of Hagedorn's odes (1). All this aroused little response from Hagedorn at first, but in May he wrote promising to ask a friend from Bremen about the MS, and if he could not help, to write direct to Stadtvogt Renner in Bremen, for Renner had already shown a lively interest in the older and popular forms of poetry, particularly by means of his poem Hennynk de Han, which he had written in Low German on the model of Renicke Fuchs (2). Finally Renner was approached and he proved to be a valuable ally, for he not only obtained the MS Bodmer required from the Rathsbibliothek in Bremen, but also took the trouble to bring to light a number of others. By February 1746 his investigations were complete and in April his report, containing a list of MSS of mediaeval German poetry preserved in the libraries of Bremen and accompanied by extract from the folio¹⁰ volume of Minnelieder was sent to Bodmer. The volume of Minnelieder, which proved to be part of Goldast's

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- (1) F. von Hagedorn, Poetische Werke, ed. Eschenburg, Hamburg, 1800, 5ter Theil "Auszüge des von Hagedornischen Briefwechsels", pp. 180, 183, 190 sqq.
- (2) Cp. J. Grüger, "Bodmer, Stadtvogt Renner in Bremen, Wiedeburg in Jena," Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, vol. 16, (Halle, 1884), p. 199 - letter from Hagedorn to Bodmer of 11 May 1745.
- C.F. Renner was one of a group of members of the "Teutsche

bequest to the council of the town in which he had spent his last years, contained the same index comprising 140 names as the Paris MS, though the work of only 59 poets actually appeared. Renner had no doubt that this was an incomplete copy of the Paris MS, but he took the precaution of sending Bodmer some extracts for comparison. (1)

Gesellschaft" in Bremen, who maintained the interest in dialect and in the older language, which was first cultivated in N. Germany by Dietrich von Strade (1637-1718). His book, Mennynk de Han, in which Hagedorn found not only linguistic but also poetic talent, was published in 1732 in Hamburg under the pseudonym, F.H. Sparre.

- (1) On the course of Bodmer's negotiations with Renner, see Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, vol. 16, p. 200, particularly letters of 28 Sep. 1745 and 30 April 1746. Cp. also G.F. Ständlin, Briefe berühmter und edler deutschen an Bodmer, Stuttgart, 1749, p. 17. Letter of 30 Mar 1746. (The context proves the date given by Ständlin (30 März 1764) to be a mistake.)

Renner's report, headed "Nachricht von einigen alten deutschen Gedichten, welche sich in Mscto in Bremen befinden," is preserved in MS Bodmer 27 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, and is reprinted almost completely in Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, vol. 16, pp. 201 sqq. The reprint does not, however, include the extracts made by Renner, which were taken from the works of poets whose names he quotes as follows: Keiser Heinrich, König Chunrat, König Wenzel, Heinrich von Pressela, Otte von Brandenburg, Margrav Heinrich, Herzog von Anhalt, Johans von Brabant, Rudolf von Niuwenburg, Kraft von Toggenburg, Chunrat von Kilchberg, Otte von Bettenloube, von Hohenburg, Heinrich von Veldig, Gotfrit von Nifen, Heinrich von Sachs, Der von Kiurenberg, Dietmar von Ast, Werner von Tiufen, Kristan von Hamle, Heinrich von Morungen, Wolrich von Winterstetten, Wolfram von Eschilbach, Stigenberg, Tanhuser.

Meanwhile Schoepflin's negotiations in Paris continued slowly. In July 1745 he reported, that though the MS could not be allowed out of France, permission had been given for it to be sent to Strassburg, where a copy could be made; this would be done as soon as the King's signature could be obtained. In fact a number of causes contributed to make the delay considerably longer and the MS did not finally arrive in Strassburg until September 1746. Thereafter, however, the tempo of events quickened. By October Schoepflin had decided that it was essential for the potential editors to be able to consult the original text, and accordingly sought and obtained permission to send the MS to Zürich, where it arrived little over a month later, in November 1746. (1) A copy was begun almost at once, the bulk of the writing being done by Breitinger with occasional assistance from Bodmer, and by August 1747 it was finished. (2)

When Bodmer began his enquiries for the MS he can have had no very clear idea of the nature of its contents. However, the gradual revelation of it appears to have given him a wide satisfaction which is amply demonstrated in the articles and letters with which, from 1745 onwards, he sought to interest

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- (1) The correspondence relating to the later stages of the negotiations for the MS is reprinted in "Strassburger Studien"; vol. II, pp. 460 sqq. and p. 452.
 - (2) Cf. "Strassburger Studien", vol. II, p. 469. The copy is preserved in Ms. Bodmer 27 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.

the general public and his friends in the progress of his work. The first articles appeared in the Zürich literary magazine, the Freywüthige Nachrichten von neuen Büchern which Bodmer and Breitinger had founded the year before. (1) In these, and in two more essays in the Critische Briefe of 1746, Bodmer pointed out the likeness between the MHG lyric and the best of contemporary lyric poetry, and stressed his opinion that modern poets could find inspiration for the content and expression of their verse in this older poetry (2). His correspondents too were mainly poets, notably Hagedorn, Gellert, Lange and Gleim, all of whom gave him a sympathetic hearing and at various times assisted in his researches and in making known his views (3). As early as 1747, Hagedorn published a preface to his Oden und Lieder, in which he expressed the opinion that his songs were written in the same spirit as those of the troubadours and the old Swabian poets, to whom Bodmer had drawn attention (4).

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- (1) Freywüthige Nachrichten von neuen Büchern, Zürich, 1745, Xv Stück, (14 April, 1745) pp. 118 sqq; XXXVI Stück (8 Sep. 1745) pp. 283 sqq. (a review of Gleim's Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern, Berlin, 1745.)
- (2) Critische Briefe, Zürich, 1746, 12 ter Brief, pp. 198 sqq. "Von den Vortheilen der schwäbischen Sprache, in welcher die Minnesinger geschrieben haben"; 13ter Brief, pp. 209 sqq. "Von der Artigkeit in den Gedanken und Vorstellungen der Minnesinger."
- (3) Cp. Stäudlin, Briefe, pp. 55 and 95, for letters from Gleim and Gellert; and W. Koerte, Briefe der Schweizer aus Gleims litt. Nachlass, Zürich 1804, pp. 97, for letters from

To these friends Bodmer confided his plans for dealing with the vast material now at his disposal. In a letter to Lange of 12 April 1747, for example, he spoke of publishing a specimen of the contents of the MS almost immediately, and later seeking a publisher for the whole, preferably one who would allow the printing to be done under his supervision in Zürich. (1)

The first aim was accomplished when in 1748 the Proben der alten schwäbischen Poesie des dreyzehnten Jahrhunderts. Aus der Manessischen Sammlung appeared in Zürich. The Proben contain extracts from the work of eighty-two poets, a glossary and fairly extensive notes on grammar, sketches of the lives of a number of poets, and a history of the manuscript. Bodmer was now quite convinced that he possessed the source from which Goldast had drawn, for Goldast's version of the Tyrol von Schotten and Winsbeke poems corresponded exactly to the MS, and, moreover, he had found some marginal notes in Goldast's hand. On the strength of this discovery Bodmer was able

Gleim. Lange's correspondence with Bodmer is published in S.G. Lange's Sammlung gelehrter und freundschaftlicher Briefe, Halle, 1769. Isolated references to Bodmer's MHG studies are also to be found in correspondence with J.E. Schlegel, op. E.M. Wilkinen, "Some unpublished correspondence of J.E. Schlegel, MLR, vol. XLXIV, No. 3, Jul. 1939; and in a letter H.D. Gieseke, op. Literarische Pamphlete, nebst Briefen an Bodmer, Zürich, 1782, p. 117.

(4) F. von Hagedorn, Oden und Lieder in fünf Büchern, Hamburg, 1747. 'Vorbericht' pp. IV sqq. and footnote, pp. XVI sq. and footnote.

(1) Sammlung gelehrter und freundschaftlicher Briefe, p. 156.

to reconstruct the story of the manuscript in part from Goldast's correspondence about it (1). Another chapter of its history, namely that of its origin, was illuminated in a highly gratifying way by a passage in the text itself. Bodmer's joy knew no bounds when he discovered the statement by the fourteenth-century Zürich poet Johannes Hadlaub that a citizen of Zürich named Manesse had collected and made a copy of a great number of songs. There was no doubt at all in Bodmer's mind that the book to which Hadlaub referred was the Paris MS, and that its originator was Ruediger Manesse, who was a member of the ruling council of Zürich from 1280 until well into the fourteenth century (2).

This discovery appealed strongly to the local patriotism which had already proved so powerful an inspiration to Bodmer's mediaeval studies. It also stirred his imagination, satisfying the 'romantic' tendency of his youth which he had never quite lost, though his opportunities for indulging it had become fewer. This, however, was an occasion when he felt justified in giving it free play. The result was "Das Erdmännchen", a fanciful essay, in which Bodmer described an nocturnal encounter with a dwarf, a survivor of the age-old race

(1) Proben, pp. VI^s & sqq. Bodmer's quotations from Goldast's correspondence are taken from the Epistolae Clarorum et Doctorum Virorum ad M. Goldastum, Frankfurt, 1688, pp. 57,

111-2, 58, 171, 181, 200, 372, 226, 239, 192-3 and 119-120.

(2) Proben, pp. XIII sqq.

of Koenig Laurin, who had lived for thousands of years in the heart of a mountain. During his long life the dwarf had known and loved the Minnesinger, and when their day was passed, had ^{taken} removed the manuscript made by Manesse for safe-keeping in his mountain home, whence he would remove it only for true lovers of song. For hundreds of years these had been all too few, but now Bodmer had proved himself to be one of their number. Therefore he was allowed to enter the magic mountain and to carry off its treasure.

The "Erdmännchen" may be regarded to some extent as the conclusion of the first stage of Bodmer's work on the MHG lyric. It came as the last of an important series of essays on the historical and poetic aspects of Old Swabian poetry, which appeared in the Neue Critische Briefe of 1749 (1). After that year Bodmer's printed works contained no reference to the Minnesang until 1758, when he was finally able to publish a more nearly complete version of the 'Manessische Handschrift.'

The lack of references in Bodmer's published works did not necessarily mean any lessening of interest on his own part or on that of his friends. Indeed there are many indications to the contrary. Although the Proben had no great

(1) Neue critische Briefe über gantz verschiedene Sachen von verschiedenen Verfassern, Zürich, 1749. 74 ter Brief, "Das Erdmännchen", pp.475 sqq.

popular success, they were welcomed by those who already knew something of Bodmer's work. Renner in Bremen, for example, was so impressed that he composed a MHG poem in honour of Bodmer and Breitinger, and later took to making impromptu translations for the amusement of his friends (1)

At this time too Bodmer won some new admirers, one or two of whom were to assist materially with the work of research, and who, moreover, required no prompting to do so. Among the first to come forward was a young man in Jena who revealed to Bodmer the existence of a second manuscript containing Minnelieder.

In 1748 the Jenaische Gesellschaft finally broke with Gottsched and addressed itself instead to Bodmer and Breitinger, who were made honorary members. They inherited, not only this honour, but also the benefit of some researches, on the German MSS in the university library, which Gottsched had partly inspired. In 1746 the former librarian, J.C. Mylius, had published a description of the library's treasures which had led Gottsched to seek permission to examine them (2). His request seems to have aroused the authorities to a lively sense of the value of their possessions, and they refused to allow him to work on the MSS, preferring to entrust the task

(1) Cp. Stäudlin, Briefe, p. 79.

(2) Cp. J.C. Mylius, Memorabilia Bibliothecae academiae Jenensis, Jena und Weissenfels, 1746. p. 376.

to one of their own number, J.W.Blaufus. In October 1748, when Blaufus first wrote to Bodmer, he had already spent two years in studying the MSS. In his letter he expressed his appreciation of Bodmer's efforts and the hope that the Proben whose fame had already reached him, would provide a suitable model for the presentation of the results of his own investigations which were concerned with similar material. He then described the MSS in his charge, particularly that containing Minnelieder, giving a list of the poets, some of whom were already known as contributors to the Paris MS (1). In spite of this promising start, the correspondence proved unproductive. Promises to send samples were unfulfilled, and after August 1749 the letters ceased. Blaufus later admitted that the utter indifference of the public to his work and the apparently insuperable obstacles to its publication had led him to abandon his efforts. Bodmer may well have felt some sympathy for him, for his own attempts to find a publisher for the Paris MS were proving equally abortive. However, he did not give up so easily; nor did B.C.B. Wiedeburg, the secretary of the Jenaische Gesellschaft, who in 1751 took over Blaufus' work. Wiedeburg at once made a copy of the MS, omitting the musical notation, though indicating where it should be, and sent it off to Bodmer. The correspondence flourished and for

(1) Cp. Zeitschrift für d. Philologie, vol. 16 pp. 208 sqq., letter of 17 Oct 1748, where Blaufus gives a full account of the events leading up to the writing of his letter. The MS to which he refers is now known as the Jenaer Liederhandschrift.

a while there was talk of trying to get both MSS published as a continuation of Schilter's Thesaurus (X). However, publishers still showed no interest, and by 1754 both parties were resigned to doing their best by piecemeal methods.

Wiedeburg was first in the field with a detailed description of the form and content of several mediaeval German MSS (Z). By far the greater part of this was devoted to the Ms of Minnelieder. Its form, history and contents were discussed; then followed accounts of the individual poets on the lines of those given by Bodmer in the Proben, though the remarks here were on the whole fuller and more richly illustrated by quotations; finally there were some remarks on the difference between this and the Paris MS.

Bodmer meanwhile had decided to try to raise money to pay for the publication of his manuscript by means of a public subscription. In 1753 a circular outlining the project was distributed by the firm of Conrad Orell und Compagnie in Zürich, and thereafter letters from Bodmer's friends contained frequent references to the numbers of subscriptions they had been able to raise (2). Hagedorn and Renner did

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- (1) B.C.B. Wiedeburg, Ausführliche Nachricht von einigen alten teutschen poetischen Manuskripten aus dem dreyzehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderte, welche in der jenaischen akademischen Bibliothek aufbehalten werden, Jena 1754.
 - (2) A copy of the circular is preserved in MS. Bodmer 27 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.

their part in Hamburg and Bremen, as did Sulzer in Berlin, but the results were sadly disappointing (1). However, what little money had been gathered was finally supplemented through the efforts of friends in Zürich, and in 1758 it was possible to publish the first part of the Sammlung von Minnesingern aus dem schwäbischen Zeitpunkte (2).

Valuable as it was, the Sammlung was hardly likely to make a wide appeal to Bodmer's contemporaries, for, beyond a very general introduction, nothing at all was done to ease the difficulty they must have felt in dealing with such unfamiliar material. Thus his years of effort were rewarded by no immediate success.

This disappointment, Bodmer's growing estrangement from the anacreontic poets with whose work he had so closely associated the MHG lyric, and his preoccupation with other kinds of literature, left him with little enthusiasm for further attempts to interest his contemporaries in the Minnesang. However, his own interest was kept alive for some years longer by the discovery of the ^{old} ~~their~~ and last of the MSS containing Minnelieder to become known to him.

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- (1) Op. Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, vol. 16, p. 205; a letter from Hagedorn to Bodmer (dated 22 April, 1754) in MS Bodmer 2 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich; Koerte, Briefe der Schweizer, p. 176, letters from Sulzer to Bodmer, Kleist and Gleim.
- (2) Sammlung von Minnesingern aus dem schwäbischen Zeitpunkte CXL Dichter enthaltend; durch Ruedger Manessen weiland des Rathes der uralten Zyrich. Aus der Handschrift der

An entry in "Bodmer's Tagebuch" for the year 1757 runs as follows: Wir erhielten aus dem Benediktiner Kloster Weingarten einen Codex in octavum, der Minnelieder in sich fasste, meistens von den Sängern in der Manessischen Sammlung und dieselben Lieder mit einiger Verschiedenheit der Lesarten. Aber der Codex ist weit reicher an Liedern. Ein Gedicht ist darin auf den Amor und seine Streiche, ziemlich lang. Wir erhielten den Codex durch Vorschub des Hrn. Prälaten von S. Blasius Mar^tinus"(1). If, as Bodmer says, the date of the discovery was 1757, it seems very odd that the preface to the Sammlung von Minnesingern of 1758 should contain no reference to the new MS which was obviously closely related to the Paris MS. It is possible, however, that Bodmer was mistaken about the date, for the entries in the "Tagebuch" were almost certainly compiled at a much later date (2). The likelihood of this is increased by the fact that the MS was obtained through Martin Gerbert of St. Blasien, for there is no trace of any correspondence between Bodmer and Breitinger and Gerbert before 1760 (3). Martin Gerbert, who became

Koeniglich-franzoesischen Bibliothek herausgegeben.
Durch Vorschub einer ansehnlichen Menge von Freunden
des Minnegesanges. Zwei Theile, Zurich, 1758-9.

- (1) I. Baschthold, "Bodmers Tagebuch" (1752-1782) in Turicensia
Beiträge zur Züricherischen Geschichte durch Züricherische
Mitglieder der Allgemeinen Geschichtsforschenden Gesell-
schaft der Schweiz. (Zürich, 1891), p. 215.
- (2) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", p. 190.
- (3) Cp. Korrespondenz des Fürstbistes Martin II Gerbert von
St. Blasien. Badische Historische Commission, Karlsruhe,
1931.

Abbot of St. Blasien in 1764, was an antiquarian scholar of much the same standing as Schoepflin, and the acquaintance between him and Bodmer and Breitinger began in much the same way as that with Schoepflin had done. In June 1760 Gerbert visited Zürich in the course of a journey through northern Switzerland in search of material for his works on the early Alemannic liturgy and church music. During his stay Breitinger was particularly helpful and it seems that Breitinger took the opportunity to further a line of enquiry which had begun as far back as 1752. "Bodmers Tagebuch" and correspondence show that in that year a fugitive from the Benedictine monastery of Kremsmünster had taken refuge in Zürich, and had brought the news that the library at Kremsmünster contained MSS of old Alemannic and old Swabian songs (1). Bodmer was naturally anxious to follow up this information, but had to do so without embarrassing the fugitive. He therefore instituted discreet enquiries in St. Gallen and elsewhere as to the preservation of mediæval German manuscripts in Benedictine monasteries in general, but these proved unsuccessful and nothing more was done for the time being. In 1760, however, when Gerbert came to Zürich, Breitinger put the matter quite frankly to him, and

(1) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", p. 191 and J. Gröger, "Der Entdecker der Nibelungen", Frankfurt am Main, 1883, pp. 16 sqq.

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asked him to make enquiries, not only in Kremsmünster, but also in the other monasteries which he visited in his travels. Gerbert agreed to help and called for reports from Villingen, St. Blasien and Weingarten, as well as Kremsmünster. The latter produced nothing, but in Weingarten the manuscript containing Minnelieder came to light, and was sent to Breitinger in 1761 (2).

Bodmer and Breitinger were clearly delighted with the find and made a copy of the Minnelieder, but there was little encouragement to do more at that time, and in fact the contents of the manuscript were not published during their lifetime, nor did it ever receive more than passing attention in their published works. (2)

(1) Cp. Korrespondenz des Fürstabtes M. Gerbert pp. 59, 62 sqq. A postscript to the letter of 18 Mar 1761, p. 64, shows that Gerbert had been told about the fugitive monk.

(2) Cp. Korrespondenz des Fürstabtes M. Gerbert, p. 70. Evidence that a copy was made is given in a letter written to Breitinger by Baron Zurlauben of Zug on 14 Jan. 1762, which is contained in MS Bodmer 22 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. Zurlauben was keenly interested in Swiss military history and in the history of the Swiss nobility, particularly in its genealogical and heraldic aspects. He wrote "Oserais-je aussi vous prier, Monsieur, de ne pas perdre de vue la curieuse collection de poésies allemandes du XII^e siècle. Mr. votre digne confrère M. Bodmer et vous enrichirez la legs des lettres d'une découverte très agréable, surtout si indépendamment de la gravure, vous y ajoutiez vos remarques. M. Bodmer a eu l'amitié de me montrer un recueil d'une partie des mêmes poésies, qu'il a obtenu de Weingarten..."

Bodmer's enquiries until 1748 mainly concerned the MHQ lyric, but this does not mean that didactic and epic poetry, which played an important part in the essay of 1743, was entirely neglected.

In the case of didactic poetry, and more particularly of the fable, the extreme popularity of this kind of poetry with contemporary poets and literary theorists gave every encouragement to research. Bodmer's remarks on the older fables he had found were welcomed by C.F. Gellert, whose "Nachricht und Exempel von alten deutschen Fabeln" of 1746 obviously owed much to Bodmer's essay. (1)

However, the popularity of the subject and the comparatively good state of preservation of the memory of MHQ didactic poetry, lessened the scope for original discoveries in this field. Bodmer soon found that his MS of Fables was

The only reference to the MS in Bodmer's published works comes in the Literarische Denkmale, Zürich, 1779, p.16. "In dem Benedictiner Kloster Weingarten ligt ein Kodex auf Pergament, der Minnelieder hat, wovon die meisten auch in der Manessischen Sammlung stehen. Bey denselben ist ein Gedicht epischen Inhalts, von dem Got Amur."

- (1) This article by Gellert, dated Märzmonat 1746, was used as a preface to his Fabeln und Erzählungen, Erster Theil, Leipzig, 1748.

- (2) Cf. "Manessische Sammlung", p.132. Entry for 1753: "Brottingen, ein Gedicht des Persers, das aus dem Manessischen Fabeln, der die persische Sprache."

already known and had been published by J.G.Scherz at the beginning of the century (1). The great rarity of Scherz' work would have justified a renewed effort to bring these fables to the public notice, but during the 1740ies Bodmer and Breitinger had more urgent tasks on hand. In 1753, however, Breitinger, who thenceforth seems to have taken the lead, was given a ^{cond} ~~seene~~ MS, on parchment this time, and much more carefully written than the other, though it contained fewer fables (2). At some uncertain date he also received a copy of Scherz' work from Schoepflin. Armed with his material, he set about an edition, which was published at Zürich in 1757 under the title Fabeln aus den Zeiten der Minnesinger, and comprised a preface; the text, taken from the parchment MS, with additional readings from the paper MS and Scherz' text; grammatical notes and a glossary.

It was not until later in the same year, in the preface to Chriemhilden Rache, that Bodmer ventured a remark about the authorship of the fables, which linked his and Breitinger's

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- (1) J.G.Scherz, Specimen philosophiae moralis medii aevi, Strassburg, 1704-10. Bodmer probably heard of this work from Schoepflin, to whom he seems to have written to ask for a copy, only to learn that none was available. Cp. Strassburger Studien, II, pp.469-70, a letter from Schoepflin to Bodmer, 20 Aug.1747.
- (2) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", p.192. Entry for 1753: "Breitinger entdeckte den Pergament Codex von Rietenburgs Fabeln, der ihm geschenkt worden."

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work with that of older and younger scholars (1). Then he quoted without acknowledgement a passage adduced by Gottsched in an article of 1756, in order to show that the author's name was "Von Riedenburg" (2). In fact both he and Gottsched were mistaken, as Lessing later pointed out in an article of 1781, in which he established beyond doubt that the credit for the fables was due to Ulrich Boner (3).

Bodmer's preoccupation with the MHG lyric during the 1740ies goes far to explain his comparative lateness in turning his attention to epic poetry, but this was not the only reason for his delay. In spite of Bodmer's championship of Paradise Lost, there was as yet no general interest in epic poetry; and the examples of the MHG epic, which he knew, had not struck him as being of such outstanding merit as to be likely to arouse enthusiasm in such circumstances. It is true that he had been impressed by the fragment of Partonopier und Meliur, and he doubtless shared Breitinger's high opinion of the Annolied, which was expressed in their joint edition of Opitz' works of 1745: Ich darf demnach behaupten, dass in keinem von den übrig gebliebenen Gedichten aus den mittleren Zeiten, so viel Kunst

(1) Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage, Zürich, 1757, p. I.

(2) Cp. Das neueste aus der anmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit, Leipzig 1756, pp. 423 sqq.

(3) Cp. G. E. Lessing, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur, Aus den Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel, Brunswick, 1773-81. "Über die sogenannten Fabeln aus den Zeiten der Minnesinger", 5ter Beitrag, pp. 3 sqq.

so viel Erhabenheit anzutreffen sey, als in dem gegenwärtigen---" Wir haben ziemlich deutliche Spuren, dass diesem Verfasser weder Homer noch Virgil unbekannt gewesen seyn; Wer dieses nicht glauben wollte, müsste ihm noch ein grösseres Lob zugestehen, nemlich dass er durch die Stärke seiner eigenen poetischen Denkart auf gleichmässige Manieren die Sachen vorzustellen, gefallen sey, wie man bey dem Griechischen und Lateinischen Poeten antrifft." (1) He probably also shared Bodmer's view that the only other MHG epic poems they knew, namely Stricker's Karl der Grosse and the extract from the Rolandslied, which appeared in Schilter's Thesaurus, did not reach the same high standard: "In Stricker's Gedichte von dem grossen Carl, und in dem Überbleibsel eines Ungenannten von dem Spanischen Kriege sind in der That rechtschaffene poetische Schoenheiten, und die vielfältig darinnen eingestreuten Reden der Personen sind nach der Natur und Art der epischen Dichtart; aber die Verfasser haben sich im übrigen zu genau an die historische Wahrheit gehalten; daneben ist in diesen Werken zu wenig Verschiedenheit; die Handlungen haben zu viele Gleichheit unter einander, und scheinen einen Mangel an poetischer Erfindungskraft zu verrathen." (2)

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- (1) M. Opitzens von Boberfeld Gedichte. Durch I.I.B. und I.I.B. besorget. Erster Theil, Zürich, 1745, pp.160-161.
 The work on this edition was finished in October, 1743, cp. J. Baechthold, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in der Schweiz, Frauenfeld, 1887. Breitinger's responsibility for dealing with Opitz' edition of the Annolied is revealed in a letter from Bodmer to Hagedorn of 11 July, 1745. Cp. Hagedorn, Poetische Werke, ed. cit., 5ter Theil, p. 200.
- (2) Op. cit. pp. 160-161.

After 1745, Bodmer's knowledge of the whereabouts and contents of MSS of MHG epic poetry grew, though somewhat haphazardly at first. Certain of his friends engaged in the main task of research on the Minnesang made incidental discoveries of epic poems. Renner in Bremen, for example, found Wigalois, which Goldast had mentioned in the Paran^etetici, and in 1746 he sent extracts to Bodmer (1). In 1747, Bodmer asked Schoepflin for information about Gottfried von Strassburg and poems he had found in the Paris MS, and Schoepflin replied with the news that a poem entitled Von der Minne, and attributed to Gottfried, was preserved in the Johanniterbibliothek in Strassburg (2). Other sources of information were the works of older scholars, which Bodmer now consulted in connection with his work on the Minnesang, notably W.E. Tenzel's Monatliche Unterredungen, which are mentioned in the Proben (3); and the current discoveries of fellow workers in the field, particularly Gottsched, the results of whose researches were usually announced in the Neuer Büchersaal. (4)

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- (1) The extracts, which are very brief and concern the authorship and date of the poem only, were included in the report sent to Bodmer in April 1746, cp. supra pp. 98-99.
 - (2) Cp. Strassburger Studien, II., pp. 469-70, letter from Schoepflin to Bodmer of 20 Aug. 1747.
 - (3) W.E. Tenzel, Monatliche Unterredungen einiger guten Freunde von allerhand Büchern und andern annehmlichen Sachen, Leipzig, 1689-1698, cp. Proben, p. XX.
 - (4) Neuer Büchersaal der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste, Leipzig, 1745-1751.

From these two latter sources, Bodmer derived information about two poems which were to play an important part in focussing his attention on the epic - Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival and Heinrich von Veldeke's Eneide.

Bodmer's interest in Parzival dates back to the essay of 1743, in which he mourned the loss of the poem (1). At that time he was certainly unaware of the existence of the printed version of 1477, in spite of the fact that it had been mentioned in Gottsched's Beyträge (2). By 1746, however, his knowledge had increased, for in the Critische Briefe of that year he quoted a strophe from the Jüngere Titirel, which was bound with the printed Parzival, attributing it wrongly, though, in the circumstances, understandably, to Wolfram. (3)

(1) Sammlung kritischer Schriften, 7tes Stück, p.34.

(2) Beyträge, 7tes Stück, 3 (1733⁴¹), p.488.

(3) Critische Briefe, pp.207-8⁴ "gestalt Eschilbach sich schon zu seiner Zeit darüber geklaget hat:

Mit rimen schlecht drei genge
Sind disin lietin worden
Gemessen in rechter lenge
Wise und wort nach meister arden
Ze kurz zu lang ein liet vil swachet
Ich Wolfram bin unschuldig
Ob Schriber recht unrichtig machet."

It seems likely that Bodmer found this quotation in Gottsched's essay De rarioribus nonnullis bibliothecae Paulinae codicibus, which appeared at Leipzig in 1746, and contained a description of and extracts from the 1477 version of Parzival. He certainly possessed a copy of it at some time, since it was among the books which he bequeathed to the Stadtbibliothek in Zürich. (1) Gottsched also mentioned Parzival, though without quotations, ⁱⁿ his Abhandlung von dem Flore der deutschen Poesie zu Kaiser Friedrichs des Ersten Zeiten, which appeared also in 1746 (2).

(1) Cp. Catalogus librorum bibliothecae Tigurinae, Tome V, Zürich, 1809, p.314.

(2) In Leipzig.

Despite these early references, it was not until 1748 that Bodmer began to show any deep interest in Parzival. By then, new incentives to the study of the epic in general, and of this poem in particular, had asserted themselves.

In May 1747 Bodmer received the first specimens of Klopstock's Messias and realized with delight that Germany was at last to produce an epic poet to rank with Homer and Milton. The tremendous enthusiasm for epic poetry, which followed this discovery, is reflected in Bodmer's attitude to the MHG epic. The account of Heinrich von Veldeke given in the Proben is concerned almost entirely with the Eneide and it concludes as follows: "Des von Eschilbach Lieder, der sein Zeit-verwandter gewesen, sind ungefehr in demselben Charakter geschrieben. Aber man muss die Poesie des von Veldig nach der Eneid und des von Eschilbach nach dem Parcival beurtheilen." (1) Only a very general significance can be attached

(1) Proben, p. XXXVII.

Bodmer's information about the Eneide was derived from one or more of several sources: Tenzel, Monatliche Unterredungen, Nov. 1691, pp. 924 sqq., where it is described among other MSS belonging to the library in Sachsen-Gotha. This Bodmer certainly knew.

Gottsched, Programma de antiquissima Aeneidos versione Lipsiae, 1745, or the review of this in the Neuer Bücher-saal, II Bd. 1ster St., Jan. 1746, pp. 78 sqq.

All these contain the passage from the end of the poem, summarized by Bodmer in the Proben, where the fate of the MS at the court of Hermann von Thüringen is described. (Cp. O. Behaghel, Hs. v. Veldeke Eneide, Heilbronn, 1882, pp. 537 sqq., lines 13429-13490.)

to this remark, since Bodmer as yet knew hardly anything of the poems concerned. Nevertheless an important principle had been suggested and a powerful incentive to the study of epic texts was given.

Bodmer's immediate researches within this broad framework were inspired by comparatively limited motives. As has been shown, ^{his} ~~Bodmer's~~ interest in Wolfram drew much of its inspiration from the fact of ^{the poet's} ~~his~~ connection with the brilliant court of Hermann von Thüringen. (The knowledge that Heinrich von Veldeke was also in Hermann's entourage probably played its part in attracting Bodmer to the Eneide.) Interest in this aspect of Wolfram's work was increased when in 1748 an article appeared in the Neuer Büchersaal, in which quotations from the 1477 version of Parzival were adduced to prove that the Klingsohr of the Wartburgkrieg had given his name to a character in Wolfram's poem (1). Bodmer, who had long admired Klingsohr, was naturally anxious to discover whether the claim made was just. He therefore wrote to Hagedorn in Hamburg, asking him if he could find a friend in Leipzig who would verify the details in the copy of Parzival in the Pauliner Bibliothek (2). Hagedorn put the affair in

(1) Neuer Büchersaal, VI.Bd. 1stes Stück (Jan.1748),p.64.

(2) Hagedorn, Poetische Werke, ed.cit. V, p.210, letter of 10 Sep.1748. In this letter Bodmer also expressed the hope that Gottsched would publish the text of the Eneide, of which he had a copy taken from the MS in Gotha.

the hands of Professor Kästner in Leipzig, who sent him the information he required in March 1749 (1).

A second motive for interest was provided by Bodmer's concern with the relationship between old Swabian and Provençal poetry, essays on which were being planned in 1748 (2). Here again Bodmer was certainly indebted to Gottsched's De rarioribus nonnullis etc. codicibus of 1746, in which quotations relating to Kyot were given, for these quotations were used in an essay in the Neue critische Briefe of 1749, entitled "Von der Ähnlichkeit zwischen den schwabischen und den provenzalischen Poeten" (3)

The material for the rest of Bodmer's remarks on the MHG epic, here and elsewhere in the Neue critische Briefe, was drawn almost entirely from Tenzel's Monatliche Unterredungen of January, 1691. Tenzel's quotations from Tomasin von Zerclere's Welsche Gast, were reproduced to show the link between German and Italian poetry (4). Hugo von Trimberg's Der Renner and Freydank's Bescheidenheit were likened to the "Motz oder Sprüche" of Provençal poetry (5). Finally a whole list of poems, in which more or less indication of Provençal origin could be found, was given. "Es ist ganz wahrscheinlich, dass die Gedichte von

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- (1) A page of notes in Kästner's hand, dated 17.3.1749, is preserved in MS Bodmer 28 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.
- (2) Cp. Koerte, Briefe, p.97. Bodmer to Gleim 11 Sep. 1748.
- (3) 13ter Brief, pp.78 sqq.
- (4) Neue Critische Briefe, p.65.
- (5) Neue Critische Briefe, p.82.

Carl dem Grossen, von Pabst Leo vom Grave Wilhelm von Narbon, von Alexander dem Grossen, von Herzog Beliant ebenfalls von provenzalischem Ursprunge sind un nur ins Deutsche übersezet worden seyn. Reinfried von Brunsuic mochte wohl einem Deutschen zum Verfasser haben, nachdem er von deutschen Helden handelt. Die meisten von diesen Werken werden sonst Wolfram von Eschilbach und Uolrich von Türheim zugeschrieben. Wenn es wahr ist, dass sie noch in der Wolfenbüttelschen Bibliothek, und einige in der fürstl. Sachsen-gothatischen vorhanden sind, so dürfte man bey ihnen selbst zuverlässigere Nachrichten von ihren Verfassern und Übersetzern finden." (1)

(1) Neue critische Briefe, p.86.

After the publication of the Proben in 1748 and of the Neue Critische Briefe in 1749 Bodmer was temporarily less occupied with work on the Minnesang. There was a lull, during which he had to wait to see whether public interest would be such as to create a demand for the immediate publication of the whole of the Paris MS. When it finally became clear that it would not, he was free to devote his attention to other pursuits. During the 1750ies his own numerous epic poems on biblical and classical and other subjects appeared. Among the other subjects, were a number drawn from MHG epic poetry, the study of which now began in earnest.

At some uncertain date between 1749 and the autumn of 1750 Bodmer finally obtained a copy of the printed Parzival. The circumstances under which he obtained it are obscure, but the fact is put beyond doubt by an article in the Freyenmüthige Nachrichten of September, 1750. There Bodmer challenged a number of statements about Parzival, which Gottsched had made in a preface to Pantke's translation of Chansierges Avantures de Néoptoleme, and challenged them in terms, which show that he was speaking from personal knowledge of the work :

"Herr Gottsched besitzt den Partzival und den Tschonatulander im Drucke von 1477, aber es ahnet ihm nicht, dass diese beyden Werke aus der Presse des alten Faustus sind. Er giebt uns von dem Inhalte des Partzivals nur etliche mangelhafte Züge, die uns doch schon zeigen, dass er seine Sprache nicht verstanden hat. Er sagt Pellicane habe Gamureten ihre Liebe nie gebothen. In dem Roman stehet ausdrücklich, dass Gam^uret mit ihr eine Liebesverständniss gehabt habe, aus welchem Ferafis gebohren

worden, welcher halb weiss und halb schwarz gewesen, denn seine Mutter war eine Mährin. Von dem Gral, auf welchem die Haupthandlung und die Auflösung dieses Romans beruht, weiss uns der Herr Prof. nichts zu sagen" (1)

Bodmer's own views on the problems raised by Gottsched were given more fully later, in a series of essays appended to the second edition of his Gedichte in gereimten Versen of 1754. (2)

Meanwhile in 1753, he had published Der Parsival, a version of part of the poem in modern hexameters. (3)

This was followed in 1755 by a similar version of book one, entitled Camuret. (4)

Bodmer's omission to attempt to place the original text before the public was due to a number of aesthetic and practical considerations, most of which can be discussed more profitably elsewhere, but it may be noted here that he was aware, that the late-fifteenth century text alone, was not a sufficiently trustworthy source for an edition of a twelfth-

(1) Freymüthige Nachrichten, XXXV Stück (2 Sep. 1750) p.279. (A review of Die Begebenheiten Neoptolems, eines Sohnes des Achilles; aus dem französischen des Herrn Chansierges in deutsche Verse übersetzt ... nebst eine Vorrede P. Prof. Gottscheds ... von A.B. Pantken, Breslau, 1749)

(2) J.J. Bodmer's Gedichte in gereimten Versen. Mit J.G. Schultheissen Anmerkungen. Dazu kommen etliche Briefe. Zweyte Auflage, Zurich, 1754. Sp. p.133 Bodmer says: "Ich habe nur unlangst durch einen Zufall, die beyden Gedichte, den Partzival und den Tschionatulander entdeket, die im Jahre 1477 durch einen ungenanten Verleger und in einer unbekanten Stadt gedruckt worden".

(3) Der Parsival, ein Gedicht in Wolframs von Eschilbach Denkart, eines Roeten aus den Zeiten Kaiser Heinrichs des VI, Zurich, 1753.

(4) In Fragmente in der erzählenden Dichtart, Zurich, 1755 p.p. 51 sqq.

Zellweger attributed the failure to lack of enthusiasm on the part of the bailiff and encouraged Bodmer to take further action. A visit to Hohenems during his annual holiday at Trogen would have been quite possible, but in fact nothing was done (1) There the matter rested until 28 July 1755, when one of Bodmer's correspondents happened to go to Hohenems and looked at the library. The man in question was Jacob Hermann Obereit, who, in 1748, while still a student in Berlin, had addressed a poem to Bodmer in praise of the Proben der alten schwäbischen Poesie. Since then he had become a hard-working general practitioner in Lindau, but had continued to foster literary ambitions, about which he wrote to the not particularly sympathetic Bodmer. However, he now atoned for any faults Bodmer may have found in him, for his letter of 29 July 1755 related how, soon after entering the library at Hohenems, he had picked up, MSS of Barlaam und Josephat and what proved to be MS C. of the Nibelungenlied.

"Ehen gestern habe unvermuthete Gelegenheit bekommen, eine kurze Reise nach Hohenems zu machen, weselbst heute unter andern die Bibliothek in Augenschein genommen, und so glücklich gewesen, dass ich fast unter den ersten Büchern, so in die Hände bekommen, 2 alte eingebundene pergamentene Codices von altschwäbischen Gedichten gefunden, davon der einte sehr schön deutl. geschrieben, einen mittelmässig dicken Quartband ausmacht und ein aneinanderhängend weitläufig Heldengedichte zu enthalten scheint, von einer burgundischen Königin oder Prinzessin Crotzchild, der Titel aber ist Adventure von den Gibelungen und das ganze Buch ist in Adventuren als in Capiteln oder vielmehr Sectionen eingetheilt ... Das andere ist ein kleinerer Quartant, und scheint gleichermassen ein ganzes aber geistliches Heldengedichte zu enthalten..." (2)

(1) For an account of these early negotiations Cp. J. Crüger, Der Entdecker der Nibelungen, pp. 11 - 14

(2) J. Crüger, Der Entdecker der Nibelungen, p. 28

After making his discovery Obereit had just enough time to make a cursory examination of the rest of the library, which, however proved unproductive. He also obtained a promise from the bailiff, Wocher von Oberlachen, that, though it was not permissible for the MS to be removed, he would allow a copy to be made. ⁽¹⁾ In fact Wocher soon yielded to persuasion and allowed Bodmer, who was returning from Trogen in July, to take the MS with him to Zürich, where he made a copy in his own hand, from the latter part of the poem (from the *Twenty-sixth* Adventure), the Klage, and of extracts from the beginning.

The first indication of Bodmer's reaction to the Nibelungenlied was given in a series of essays in the Freymüthige Nachrichten of 1756 and 1757, which show that it fulfilled his highest expectations of the poetry of the period. ⁽³⁾ He found in it a power of invention to equal Homer's, and also in the second part beginning with the arrival of the Burgundians in Etzel's kingdom, a classical simplicity of action, otherwise so rare in the mediaeval epic.

(1) Cp. Der Entdecker der Nibelungen, pp. 28 and 33 sqq.

(2) Cp. Der Entdecker der Nibelungen, pp. 44 sqq. Bodmer's copy is preserved in MS Bodmer 28 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. There are also copies of extracts from Josaphat in Breitinger's hand.

(3) Freymüthige Nachrichten Mar. 1756 pp 92b sqq; Mar. 1757, pp. 74b sqq; pp. 83 sqq, pp 94b sqq; June 1757 pp. 190b. sqq.

This latter consideration decided the form of Bodmer's edition of part of the text, which appeared in 1757 under the title Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage. Chriemhilden Rache was the title given to the latter part of the poem, which was printed first; this was followed by the Klage and finally came extracts from the first part of the poem. The volume also contained selections from Josaphat and a glossary. (1).

The period when Bodmer was at work on the Nibelungen lied was also fruitful in other discoveries. In September 1755, Obereit wrote to say that the Stadtbibliothek in Lindau contained a copy of Farzival and also a poem which he described as : "Ritter Hartmanns Giwein Artus Kbnig in Abschrift von 1521". In a subsequent letter of October 1755, which accompanied the latter to Zürich, the title was amended to read "Ritter Hartmanns Epopee

(1) Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage; Zwei Heldengedichte aus dem schwäbischen Zeitpunkte. Samt Fragmenten aus dem Gedichte von den Nibelungen und aus dem Josaphat. Darzu kommt ein Glossarium. Zürich, 1757.

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von Ritter Tweins Leben".(1) It was in fact Hartmann von Aues Iwein.

This discovery was incorporated in a list of all the MHG epic poetry in any way known to Bodmer which appeared in the Frey müthige Nachrichten of 1st. Dec. 1756. Here Bodmer drew on every possible source of information, on Goldast, Schilter, Tenzel, the Neuer Büchersaal,⁽²⁾ and the testimony of MHG poets, whose works he had read. In this last group he mentioned particularly Conrad von Würzburg's references to a

(1) Cp. J. Crüger, Der Entdecker der Nibelungen pp. 36 and 38 sqq. The misreading of the title of Iwein, as Twein was perpetuated by Bodmer until 1780 (cp. "Von den Gedichten Twein und Tristan" Deutsches Museum, 1780). However a MS correction in his copy of the Literarische Denkmale, Zürich, 1779. p.3. shows that he finally recognised his error, probably when the Florence MS of the poem arrived in Zürich in 1782 (cp infra pp 150-151)

(2) Besides the articles in the Neuer Büchersaal already mentioned, two more had now come to Bodmer's notice : X Bd. 3tes Stück (1750) (an account of Herzog Ernst), and VIII Bd 8tes Stück (1749) (an account of a MS of Rheinbot von Dorens "Margraf von Palestina" belonging to the historian Justus Möser, which its owner hoped to publish). Thenceforward Möser showed a lively interest in older poetry. Cp. Möser's Sämmtliche Werke ed. B.R. Abeken, Berlin, 1843 vol III pp. 234 sqq; vol X, pp. 205 sqq. - a letter to Gleim, of 24 Jul 1756, in which he sent an extract of R. von Dorens poem with the comment: "dass ich einmal in meinen müthigen Jahren den Vorsatz gehabt habe, diesen Dichter herauszugeben, und meine Absicht erstreckte sich auf nichts weiter als auf eine allgemeine Ausgabe aller deutschen Poeten, welche bis zu Ende des 9hts geschrieben haben". Neither project was carried out.

poem about Helen of Greece and "Ecken Usfart"; Marners list of poems ; "König Ruther, von dem Russen Sturme, von Eggehartes Not, von Heimen Sturm; and a remark by Reimar von Zweter about an epic of Alexander, which was also the subject of a reference in the Annolied.

It was not long before further information about one of these poems came to light. On November 23, 1756 Sulzer wrote from Berlin to tell Bodmer of an important discovery of two MSS, which he had made in the Royal Library : Der eine ist eine Historie des Trojanischen Krieges ... Der andere ... enthält die Histoire von Floren und Blansche-fleur aus dem original eines (vermuthlich Provenzalien) Robert von Urbant Übersetzt". On the letter is a note in Bodmer's hand : "Ist vielleicht das Gedicht von Helena, dessen Conrad von Würzburg gedenkt." (1) About the same time or perhaps a little earlier the existence at St. Gallen of a second MS containing the story of the siege of Troy was revealed. (2) And in the following year a third was to come to light as a result of the renewal of the earlier connection with scholars in Strassburg.

(1) Cp. MS Bodmer 6 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. On 18 Jan 1757 Sulzer wrote again : "Ich werde Ihnen das nöthige von den Manuscripten der hiesigen Königl. Bibliothec schicken." There is no evidence to show what "das nöthige" was.

(2) Cp. Freymüthige Nachrichten of 26 Jan 1757. It is not quite clear how Bodmer found out about this, but the information probably came from the librarian, Father Kolb, who had shown some interest in his enquiries, and whose death he lamented in a letter to Sulzer of March 1763 (cp. infra p. 136, note)

In 1756, perhaps when he was assembling the material for his first article on the epic in the Freymüthige Nachrichten, Bodmer seems to have remembered Schoepflin's information about a poem attributed to Gottfried von Strassburg, which was in the Johanniterbibliothek. A remark to a friend that he would like to see the MS brought forth a letter from Elias Stöber, Regent au College de la Ville de Strassbourg to the effect that he had secured the MS from the library and would send it to Bodmer.⁽¹⁾ It arrived early in 1757, and Bodmer was delighted to find, not only Gottfried's poem, but twenty-three others, including Hartmann von Aue's Der arme Heinrich and an incomplete version of Barlaam und Josaphat.⁽²⁾ Further investigations in the Johanniterbibliothek revealed that this too contained a MS version of the story of the heroes of Troy, and Stöber again succeeded in arranging to send it to Zürich, where it arrived in February 1758.⁽³⁾ Now at last Bodmer was

(1) Cp. Strassburger Studien II, p. 480, letter of 13 Dec. 1756.

(2) A full list of the contents of the MS is to be found in J.J. Oberlin's, De poetis alsatiae eroticis medii aevi, Strassburg 1786, pp. 26 sqq.

Bodmer mentioned the MS in the preface to Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage, with special reference to Josaphat, of which he now knew 3 MSS; that in Hohenems, that in Strassburg, and that in St. Gallen, which is mentioned here for the first time. The St. Gallen MS may have been one of those to which Obereit referred in August 1755. cp. supra p. "Bodmers Tagebuch"

(3) Cp. Strassburger Studien II, pp 482 sqq and Turicensia, (1891), p.195.

able to discover the author's name, Conrad von Würzburg, for the first lines in which it occurred were missing from the other MSS he knew, and the discovery was recorded in the Preface to the Sammlung von Minnesingern.

Unfortunately Bodmer's enthusiasm for the MHG epic proved no more immediately infectious than that for the lyric had been, and Chriemhilden Rache created as little stir as Sammlung von Minnesingern had done. This was again partly due to Bodmer's failure to provide adequate aids to the study of a difficult text, and perhaps, if he had enquired a little more fully into the reasons for the indifference of his contemporaries, he would have appreciated this, and been able to remove at least one obstacle without much effort. However, he was in no mood to compromise with his contemporaries on this or any other issue, for by 1759 his estrangement from them was well nigh complete. In 1751 he had launched an attack on Uz and the anacreontic poets which drew him into a long and bitter controversy with Gleim, Jacobi, Wieland and Nicolai. A quarrel with Lessing about the theory of the fable dated back to 1746, and matters were not improved when Lessing presumed to criticize his biblical epics also. To his dismay Bodmer realized that he could no longer reduce his opponents to silence as of old. The anacreontic poets went their way, and Bodmer's epics remained unread, for his opponents had replaced him as arbiters of literary Taste(1).

(1) A full account of Bodmer's relationship with his contemporaries at this time is to be found in J. Baechthold, Geschichte der d. Literatur in der Schweiz, ed.cit.pp.655 sqq.

In his extreme bitterness at this turn of events Bodmer abandoned almost completely those interests which had involved him in so much unpleasantness, and reverted to those which had inspired his very first efforts.

Since Bodmer had first begun his work of social reform in the Discourse in 1721, a powerful movement for the social and political education of young citizens had developed in Switzerland. This now culminated, in 1762, in the foundation of the Helvetische Gesellschaft in Schzniznach, and in Bodmer's independent "Helvetische Gesellschaft zur Gerne^w." As before Bodmer turned to the past, particularly to ancient Switzerland, for an illustration of the ideals he sought to foster. He also went some way towards fulfilling the plans of the "Gesellschaft der Mahler" for descriptions of ancient Swiss manners, though the historical sketches and anecdotes he now produced were made in a rather different spirit, for the moral purpose, which before had been strongly admixed with sheer curiosity about the past, now predominated. Here Bodmer's knowledge of the HRG period was turned to some account in the illustration of the characteristics and virtues of an older society(1). The same holds good for the historical plays based on Swiss history, which appeared throughout the 1760ies. (2)

(1) Cp. Historische Erzählungen die Denkungsart und Sitten der Alten zu entdecken, Zürich, 1769; Sittliche und gefühl-reiche Erzählungen für die Realschulen, Zürich, 1773; Die Geschichte der Stadt Zürich für die Realschulen, Zürich, 1773.

(2) Cp. particularly Friedrich von Tockenurg in Drey neue Trauerspiele, Zürich, 1761, into which the figures of the Minnesinger Kraft von Tockenurg and of Klingsor are introduced.

The passing references to MHG poetry and poets in the historical anecdotes and plays and Die Rache der Schwester, an epic/hexameters based on Chriemhilden Rache, published in 1767, would appear to be the sum of Bodmer's concern with the MHG period during the 1760ies⁽¹⁾. Certainly this is the impression given by his published works alone. However, his correspondence and unpublished papers prove it to be incorrect. These show that the spirit of enquiry by no means entirely succumbed, that Bodmer persevered with his search for MSS, and in fact, made several important discoveries.

The first, that of a MS in the Magliabecchian Library in Florence, which contained Hartmann von Aue's Iwein, Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation of it, came early in 1761. There is little evidence to show how Bodmer first found out about the existence of the MS. The fame of Magliabecchi and his library had doubtless reached him, for Crescimbeni mentioned him frequently in the Istoria della Volgare Poesia Italiana and there were also numerous references in Tenzel's Monatliche Unterredungen. However, as far as I am aware, neither referred to any German MSS among the contents of the library, nor was any printed catalogue available.⁽²⁾

(1) Die Rache der Schwester appeared in Bodmer's Calliope, Zürich, 1767 vol 2, pp 186 sqq. The older poem Der Parsival was also reprinted here vol 2, pp . (Die Rache der Schwester is reprinted in J. Crüger, Gottsched und die Schweizer, D.N.L. vol 42 pp.186.sqq.)

(2) Antonio Magliabecchi, a great bibliophile, died in March 1714 and bequeathed his library of 30,000 volumes to the poor of Florence. The Bibliotheca Magliabecchiana was opened in 1747. (In 1861 it was incorporated in the Bibliotheca Nazionale which in 1885 became Bibliotheca Nazionale Centrale.) The task of compiling a catalogue, which Magliabecchi had neglected, was undertaken by the 1st. librarian, but no printed catalogue appeared during Bodmer's life-time.

Op. Crescimbeni, Istoria ed. cit pp 187, 210, 340 etc and Tenzel, Monatliche Unterredungen, Dec.1692 pp. 973. sqq.

There remains the possibility that one of Bodmer's acquaintances knew the library. The only correspondence on the subject which has emerged is that with Leonhard Usteri, Bodmer's pupil, who copied extracts for him which are still preserved in the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.⁽¹⁾ In view of this, one may perhaps assume that Usteri was also responsible for the discovery, that he was probably sent off on his travels in 1760 with instructions to examine the libraries of the towns through which he passed, and had been successful in his search. He copied Iwein and Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation of Tristan. There is no proof that he consulted Bodmer before setting to work, but if he did, the choice of these two poems becomes significant. Bodmer already knew something of Hartmann's work from the copy of Iwein found by Obereit, and the MS of Der arme Heinrich, which he had received from Strassburg. *of the work of Gottfried von Strassburg he had seen* only the Maere von der Minne, and that had apparently not pleased him, but he knew even less of Heinrich von Freiberg⁽²⁾.

(1) MS Bodmer.5 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich contains a letter written by Usteri to Bodmer on 31st Jan. 1761, in which he acknowledged Bodmer's thanks for the trouble he had taken with the MS in Florence. His copies are preserved in MS. G. 79.d.(797) of the Zentralbibliothek, together with a number of notes on them by Bodmer, on page 1 of which Bodmer remarked "In diesem Codex sind zwey Gedichte von verschiedenen Verfassern des schwäbischen Zeitalters. Beyde hat Herr Leonhard Usteri, gegenwärtig Professor Artium logicarum in Collegio Humanitatis Gynassii Turicensii auf seinen Italienischen Reisen in Florenz aus einer pergamentnen Handschrift des Maglisbecchischen Nachlasses abgeschrieben."

(2) A later note on p.9 of Bodmer's remarks accompanying the copies of the MS, contains the following comment on Gottfried. "Wir kennen ihn schon aus seinen Märcchen, die wir aus einem Codice des Johaniterhauses in Strassburg abgeschrieben haben als einen spruchreichen Schreiber, und der um des Reimes willen ganze Zeilen geschrieben hat, die ohne Schaden wegbleiben konnten."

Though the next seven years brought no major discoveries there were ample signs of the continued liv^eliness of Bodmer's interest. In 1763 his thoughts turned again to the Eneide, which was still no nearer publication, and to the MSS of Josaphat and Das Lied von Troja at St. Gallen, which had not yet been copied. In a letter to Sulzer, who was visiting Switzerland at the time, Bodmer asked him to try to arouse some interest at St. Gallen through a friend of his, and to drop a discreet hint to Gottsched that an edition of the text of the Eneide which he possessed would be welcome. (1) Neither project seems to have been successful. However, the next two years brought some encouragement, for two new students of BHG revealed themselves to Bodmer. In December 1764, the famous lawyer and historian Heinrich Christian von Henckenberg wrote from Vienna to describe a mediaeval German poem entitled Wilhelm von Orleans by Johannes von Ravensberg, and to ask whether Bodmer could give him any further information about it. (2) Then in 1765 he received a notice of Johannes v. Frankenstein's Kreuziger from a correspondent named Windisch.

(1) Cp. J. Zehander - Stadlin. Pestalozzi. Idee und Macht der menschlicher Entwicklung, Gotha, 1875, p.407, letter from Bodmer to Sulzer of 2nd. Mar. 1763. Bodmer mentions the death of the famous librarian of St. Gallen, Peter Kolbe, who had shown interest in his enquiries.

(2) The letter of 15th December 1764 is in MS Bodmer 27 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich under the heading "Korrespondenz mit Bibliotheken."

(3) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", Turicensia, 1891, p. 200

The final discovery of the period was certainly the most exciting. It was made in 1768, when the collection of books belonging to the sixteenth-century chronicler Tschudi was brought forth from obscurity in a castle in Sargans, in order to be sold. Among the treasures revealed there was a parchment MS containing Parzival (MS.1), the Nibelunglied (MS.B) and the Klage, Stricker's Karl der Grosse, Willehalm (MS. K) and a fragment of a poem by Friedrich von Suanenberg. This Bodmer tried to purchase for the Stadtbibliothek in Zürich, but he seems to have been outbid by the Abbot of St. Gallen, who secured the MS. (1) Gratifying as it must have been to find so much interest on the part of those who had not shown any great enthusiasm hitherto, Bodmer was naturally disappointed at the loss. However, the MS was lent to him for several months in 1769, when he studied it carefully and made notes on the contents, but no complete copies of the texts. (2)

(1) Cp. J. Gröger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe der Nibelungen, Frankfurt a/M, 1884, p. 45, where a letter from Bodmer to Schinz of 13 June 1772 is quoted: "Dieses Gedicht (Willehalm) ligt in der Abtey St. Gallen. Der Abt Beda hat es mit andern Handschriften aus dem Nachlasse Aegid Tschudi gekauft, als wir im Begriff waren, diesen Stück für die Stadtbibliothek zu kaufen. Ich habe die MS bei du Stelle gehabt".

(2) "Bodmer's Tagebuch" Turicensia, (1891) "Ich hatte aus der Bibliothek der Abtey St. Gallen cod. 141 membranaceum, Epöphen, erhalten mit denen ich mich beschäftigte."

The 1760ies stand out in Bodmer's life as the period at which his hopes of stirring the Germans to an interest in older poetry reached its lowest ebb. Yet, this was also the time at which powerful support for his endeavours was being prepared elsewhere, particularly in England, and was at least beginning to make its influence felt in Germany. The poetry of Ossian made its first appearance in Macpherson's Fragments of Ancient Poetry of 1760.⁽¹⁾ From 1762 onwards various attempts were made to translate this work into German and in 1768-1769, Denis' complete German version appeared.⁽²⁾ Mallets' Introduction à l'Histoire de Danemarque, (1755-56) which had inspired English critics with great enthusiasm for primitive Norse poetry was translated into German in 1765; and in the following year Gerstenberg produced his famous poem Der Skalde.⁽³⁾ The publication of Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry too fell in 1765; and by 1771 a copy had come into Herder's possession.⁽⁴⁾ Even yet the riches of this fruitful decade were not exhausted, for it produced also two other highly influential works by English scholars, whose efforts were more intimately connected than most with Bodmer's own. These were :

(1) Edinburgh, 1760.

aus (2) Die Gedichte Ossians, eines alten celtischen Dichters, dem englischen übersetzt von M. Denis, Vienna, 1768-9

(3) P.H.Mallet, Geschichte von Dänemark, ed. A.F.Roese, preface by G. Schütze, Greiswald, 1765-69
H.W. von Gerstenberg, Gedicht eines Skalden, Copenhagen und Leipzig, 1766.

(4) Thomas Percy, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry : consisting of old heroic ballads, songs, and other pieces of our earlier poets... together with some few of later date, London, 1765.

Robert Wood's Essay on the original Genius of Homer, which did much to popularize the ideas put forward by Blackwell; and Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance, in which a resemblance was traced between the Heroic and Gothic ages, and in which the author went so far as to suggest that Gothic manners were in some respects superior.⁽¹⁾

The young German poets, chiefly members of the Göttinger Hain, who were aroused to enthusiasm for older poetry by acquaintance with the works of English scholars, were chiefly interested in the idea of 'bardic' poetry of the kind produced by Ossian and the Norse Skalds, and also, they supposed, by the lost race of German bards; and in the folk song and ballad poetry. However, they did not entirely ignore MHG literature, particularly the Minnesang. Their knowledge of this was derived perhaps from Gleim, who was a contributor to their periodical the Göttinger Musenalmanach, and who in 1773, published his Gedichte nach den Minnesingern, in which the text of a number of Minnelieder was accompanied by free translations into modern German verse.⁽²⁾ This work was

(1) Robert Wood, A comparative view of the ancient and present state of the Poets. To which is prefixed an Essay on the Original Genius of Homer, London, 1767; R. Hurd, Letters on Chivalry and Romance, London, 1762.

(2) J.W.L. Gleim, Gedichte nach den Minnesingern, Berlin, 1773.

dedicated to Bodmer, whose endeavours received high praise in the preface. A note in the index to the edition of J.M. Miller's Gedichte of 1783 throws an interesting light on the study of the MHG lyric, which he and a group of friends were now inspired to undertake. "Bürger, Halm, Hölty, Voss und ich fiengen an um die damalige Zeit (1772-1773) die Minnesinger gemeinschaftlich zu lesen und zu studieren. Voll von der Einfalt und Süßigkeit dieser Sänger, ganze in ihre Zeiten zurückgezaubert, versuchten wirs etliche Lieder nach zu singen, und hatten dabei die Absicht, zum studium dieser Denkmale deutscher Dichtkunst mehrere zu ermuntern, und sie auf wahre Simplicität und verschiedene alte gute Wörter aufmerksam zu machen."⁽¹⁾ The dozen or more Minnelieder produced by Hölty in 1773 were printed in the Musenalmanach, the first of them in 1776; and Miller's efforts were published in 1783.⁽²⁾ Bürger did not produce any poems in imitation of the Minnesang, but made several favourable references to the MHG language.⁽³⁾

(1) J.M. Miller, Gedichte, Elm, 1783, p.471.

(2) Cp. E.C.H. Hölty, Sämmtliche Werke, ed. W. Michael, Weimar, 1914, pp. 114 sqq; J.M. Miller, Gedichte, ed. cit., pp. 129 sqq.

(3) Cp. G.A. Bürger, "Gedanken über die Beschaffenheit einer deutschen Übersetzung des Homer", Deutsche Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften, Halle, 1771

Besides this purely poetic interest in MHG literature, the 1770ies also brought fresh enthusiasm for scholarly research on the subject. In 1773 Lessing published the first of the Beiträge zur Geschichte und Litteratur, in which he described an early print of Boner's Fables belonging to the Ducal Library in Wolfenbüttel: (1) and in 1776 there appeared the first number of the Deutsches Museum, in which and in subsequent issues, a series of articles on older poetry was to be found. (2)

At first Bodmer held aloof from these activities. Indeed he openly disapproved of some aspects of them, more particularly of the idealization of 'bardic' poetry and of everything connected with Herder whom he dubbed "der denaturierte Ekonomiast der Natur, der gekünstelste Scribent, & der gegen die Kunst und Künstelei noch geschrieben hat." (3) However, his desire to take a hand in the guidance of the new movement gradually increased. In 1771 he set to work on a version of Wolfram's Willehalm, which he had by no means envisaged in 1769, and in 1774 produced Wilhelm von Orange, a free adaptation in modern German hexameters. (4)

(1) Cp. supra p. 114.
 (2) Deutsches Museum, ed. H. C. Boie, Leipzig, 1776-1788.
 (3) Cp. J. Crüger, "Bodmer über Goethe", Goethe Jahrbuch, V (Frankfurt am Main, 1884), p. 185, letter from Bodmer to Sulzer of 27 Oct. 1773.
 (4) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", Turicensia, 1891, p. 203. Also J. Crüger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe der Nibelungen, ed. cit., p. , where Crüger described a letter from Bodmer to Schinz (), in which Bodmer explained that Wilhelm von Orange (Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1774), was written largely from memory; for in 1769 when he had studied the MS he had had no idea of making a modern version of the poem and had therefore not made a full copy.

In 1774 too, Rudolf Schinz, who happened to be in Florence, was asked to copy several hundred lines from the MS of Gottfried's Tristan in the Bibliotheca Magliabecchiana. (1)

1775 was a particularly momentous year, for in it personal contact between Bodmer and his younger contemporaries was established. On 15 June Lavater took Goethe and the brothers Stolberg to visit Bodmer. Goethe made a better impression than Bodmer had expected in view of his friendship with Herder, but there was little opportunity to pursue his acquaintance, since he did not call again during this visit to Switzerland. However, the Stolbergs presented themselves on several occasions and appear to have pleased their host, who discovered that their enthusiasm for the bards was matched by their love of the Minnesinger and of Homer. In a letter to Schinz of 3 July 1775, Bodmer wrote: "Klopstock ist ihr Held, doch habe ich ihnen nicht verhehlt, dass Heinrich VI, die schwäbischen Friedriche, die Ottonen grossere und bessere Männer sind, als Wotan und Braga. Sie glaubten es, redeten mit vieler Liebe von den Minnesingern"; and later, on 6 Nov 1775: "Die Stolbergen sind wieder hier... Ihre Hochachtung Homers ist über alle unsere Erwartung gegründet." (2)

(1) The copy of lines 103 - 585 is preserved in MS C. 79.d. (797) of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, together with a note by Bodmer to the effect that it was made by Rudolf Schinz in 1774.

(2) Goethe Jahrbuch, V, pp. 195 and 198.

This display of enthusiasm for the Minnesang and for Homer convinced Bodmer that some at least of the younger generation might be worthy of his guidance, and it probably suggested to his mind the precise form which that guidance might take. The beginnings of a plan to dispel empty fancies about 'bardic' poetry by revealing an authentic older German epic poetry; written by the Minnesinger, and in which there were many likenesses to Homeric poetry, certainly date from 1775. As yet there was no specific project, but the idea grew and flourished, particularly as evidence of public interest in Homer increased. In 1776 Voss published the first German translation of Blackwell's Enquiry; and in 1778, Bodmer's own translation of Homer's works and Friedrich Stolberg's translation of the Iliad appeared.⁽¹⁾ Then finally Bodmer decided to attempt to direct the efforts of his contemporaries to study the older German poetry into the right channels. In 1779 he wrote a letter to the editor of the Deutsches Museum, which began as follows: "Ich habe Ahnungen, dass unsere Litteraten auf die Dichter der altschwabischen Sprache wollen aufmerksam werden. Es befremdete mich lange, dass Chriemhilden Rache durch ihre Originalität keine Sensation erweckte. Ich darf hoffen, dass Simplizität mehr in ansehen kommen werde, nachdem die Nation Homer empfangen hat. Man wird erkennen,

(1) Untersuchung über Homers Leben und Schriften; aus dem Englischen übersetzt von J.H.Voss, Leipzig, 1776; Homers Werke, Aus dem Griechischen übersetzt von dem Dichter der Noachide, Zürich, 1778. (The idea of translating Homer had been in Bodmer's mind since his first acquaintance with Klopstock's Messias. His work on the Iliad was spread over the years 1753-1774, but that on the Odyssey was completed quickly in 1775-76.)
 F. von Stolberg, Homers Ilias verdeutscht, Flensburg und Leipzig, 1778.

in welchem gleichstimmigen Verhältnisse Eschilbachs Dichtung und Ausbildung mit des Mäoniden stehe; freilich bei auffallendem Nachteil des erstern"(1) The similarity between twelfth-century German epic poetry and Homeric poetry and their joint superiority to Ossian and certainly to anything the modern 'bards' and 'skalds' could invent, was stressed repeatedly in a number of essays in the Literarische Denkmale of 1779.

In two of these, certain aspects of MHG poetry, particularly its language and the character and present whereabouts of a number of epic poems were discussed.(2) Two articles which Bodmer contributed to the Deutsches Museum in the following year carried the analysis of the MHG epic somewhat further, and a third provided information about the lives of certain poets of the period. (3)

(1) Deutsches Museum, 1779 II, p. 575.

(2) Literarische Denkmale, Zürich, 1779. pp. 1 sqq. "Von der Epopoe des altschwäbischen Zeitpunctes", pp. 81 sqq. "Kühnheit der altschwäbischen Poeten, die Sprache und die Poesie zu bereichern.", pp. 20 sqq. "Homer's edle Einfalt", pp. 37 sqq. "Viel unrecht, das dem guten Homer geschieht, pp. 164 sqq. "Kritos Bekenntnis. Revolution in der Literatur."

(3) Deutsches Museum, 1780 I, pp. 28 sqq. "Zur Geschichte der Minnesinger", pp. 340 sqq. "Die Gedichte von Twein und Tristan"; 1780 II, pp. 124 sqq. "Etwas Persönliches von den Poeten des altschwäbischen Zeitalters."

The energy with which Bodmer now sought to convince his younger contemporaries of the merits of the MHG epic and to inform them of the whereabouts of MSS, was to a great extent inspired by a desire to ensure that his work would be continued after his death. His anxiety about this was such that in 1778, when he reached the age of eighty, he wrote to Schinz outlining a plan to secure that the most important MSS would be preserved : "Ich sollte nicht mehr Projekte machen, ich habe doch eins gemacht, das mir Freude machte, wenn es in meinem Leben ausgeführt würde, und mir selbst in der Ansicht Freude machet, dass es nach meinem Tode werde zu Stande kommen." His plan was to train two pupils to copy MSS, then to obtain the MS containing Parzival, Willehalm, the Nibelungenlied (B) etc. from St. Gallen for them to transcribe.

"Wir wollen etliche Abschriften machen lassen, hernach dieselben den Bibliothekaren der Wiener -, der Wolfenbuttlers der Gothaer - Bibliothek gegen gute Bezahlung autragen. Ich möchte wenigstens diese Reliks auf diese Art etwas längere Zeit vor dem Untergange bewahren." (1)

By February 1779 the copyists were ready, and it only remained to obtain the MS. Then came a disappointment, for in March Bodmer heard that his request for the MS had been rejected, and subsequent efforts to obtain a reversal of this harsh decision failed. However, Bodmer was not entirely at a loss for he then bethought himself of the other MS of the Nibelungenlied (C) at Hohenems. Enquiries revealed that

(1) J. Crüger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe der Nibelungen, ed. cl p. 46, letter of 14 Dec. 1778.

Wocher von Oberlachen, who had been bailiff at Hohenems when Obereit discovered the MS in 1756, was still alive and might be able to help, though he no longer lived at the castle. Therefore, in May 1779, Bodmer addressed himself to Wocher, reminding him of their former transactions regarding the MS and asking whether it would be possible to send it to Zürich again, as he wished to complete his copy of it. Wocher proved most obliging and took considerable pains to go personally to Hohenems, where he succeeded in rescuing the MS from a neglected heap of books. On 29 September 1779 it reached Bodmer, who then discovered to his amazement, that while he certainly had a MS of the Nibelung^{en}lied, it was not the same as he had had before. As he explained to Schinz in October : " Es ist doch nicht ^rdeselbe Codex, sondern ein anderer und älterer, welches ich aus den variantibus lectionibus leicht abnehme." (1) It was in fact a MS. A of the Nibelungenlied. Bodmer's pleasure in this discovery was heightened by the realization that it had been made just in time to prevent the manuscript, which was already badly damaged by dampness, from being ruined altogether. The neglect it had suffered caused him to have serious misgivings as to the fate of the other MS. However, he seems to have made no further efforts to save this too, but simply contented himself with preserving what he had. By 31 Dec 1779 the copy of the first part of the poem (up to the 26th Aventure) was complete, and the differences between

(1) J. Crüger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe der Nibelungen, ed. cit., p. 50, letter of 2 Oct 1779.

MSS A and C had been noted.

Meanwhile, in November, Bodmer expected a second visit from Goethe, who travelled this time with the Duke of Weimar. When the day came, Bodmer did all in his power to interest Goethe in the Nibelungenlied^{en}, going so far as to display Stolberg's translation of the Iliad and the copy of the MHG epic side by side on his desk. Goethe was duly appreciative, and he and the Duke of Weimar agreed to assist Bodmer's researches by arranging for the MS of Heinrich von Veldeke's Eneide belonging to the library in Sachsen-Gotha^s, to be sent to him in Zürich. The MS duly arrived towards the end of August, 1780, and Bodmer made copies of a considerable part of it. (1) A little before this his fortunes had also changed for the better in another respect, for the unaccountable decision of the Abbot of St. Gallen not to part with the MS Bodmer required was now equally unaccountably reversed, and in June 1780 the MS was sent to him. (2) This meant hard work for the copyists, who had to transcribe Parzival, Willehalm and Stricker's Karl der Grosse, and for Bodmer who supervised their efforts and undertook to compare the three versions of the Nibelungenlied now known to him.

The energy which Bodmer displayed in obtaining MSS and in supervising his copyists alone was amazing enough in a man of eighty-two, but he did not rest content with that. His renewed studies of the MHG epic inspired him with fresh longing to treat the material it provided in a poetic form of his own choosing. On 24 December 1779, soon after his discovery of MS A of the Nibelungenlied, he wrote to Schinz, saying :

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- (1) Cp. Goethe Jahrbuch V p. 210 and "Bodmers Tagebuch, Turicensia, (1891), p. 211.
- (2) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", p. 211.

"Hatte ich nur 62 Jahre, so würde ich ein Gedicht von psychol-
ogischer Einheit herausspinnen, aber 82 Jahre verbieten es."⁽¹⁾

But though he clearly could not tackle the whole of the Nibelungenlied, he did undertake to recast certain passages of it, particularly some incidents from the first part, in ballad form. As long ago as 1775 he had begun to study and translate from Percy's Reliques, and among the poems preserved there, he had discovered a few, which were based upon episodes related to epic poetry.⁽²⁾ These were included in the collection of translations from Percy's published in 1780 under the title Altenglische Balladen.⁽³⁾ In 1781, a further collection appeared, the Altenglische und Altschwäbische Balladen, in which the translations from Percy were supplemented by a number of Bodmer's ballad versions of incidents from MGH epics.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Cp. J. Gröger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe der Nibelungen, ed. cit. p. 50.

(2) Cp. "Bodmers Tagebuch", Turicensia, 1891, p. 204 : "Im März und April (1775) schrieb ich Balladen aus dem Englischen".

(3) Altenglische Balladen. Fabel von Laudine, Siegeslied der Franken, Zürich, 1780. This included, for example, a translation of "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine" (Reliques, Ser., III, Bk. I, entitled "Gawans Heyrat" p.

(4) Altenglische und altschwäbische Balladen in Eschilbachs Versart. Zugabe von Fragmentum aus dem altschwäbischen Zeitalter, und Gedichten, Zürich, 1881. The new ballads are "Sivrids mordlicher Tod", pp. 150 sqq; "Die wahrsagenden Meerweiber", pp. 159 sqq; "Der Königinnen Zank" pp. 168 sqq. from the Nibelungenlied; and "Jestute", pp. 178 sqq. from Parzival.

Thus far Bodmer's labours had not ^{been} lightened by the knowledge of sympathetic support. In 1779, he complained to Schinz that no-one in Zurich shared his enthusiasm: "Ich kann keinem Zürcher die ~~xxxxx~~ die Wärme einhauchen, die ich für diese altschwäbische Poesie habe." (1) It therefore came as a surprise, almost indeed as a shock, when in May 1780, he received an offer of substantial help from Berlin, from C.H. Müller, a former pupil of his, who had since been appointed to a professorship there. (2) Müller's suggestion was that he should attempt to raise sufficient subscriptions to provide for the publication of as many MHG texts as Bodmer cared to put at his disposal. Bodmer did not show wholehearted delight at this proposal, for he doubted ^{whether} ~~that~~ public interest would be sufficient to make the scheme practicable, and in any case he knew Müller to be somewhat unreliable in his enthusiasms. However, his doubts only raised Müller's determination, and almost before Bodmer knew it, a large subscription had been raised in Germany, and the arrival of the MSS from Zurich was eagerly awaited. This left Bodmer no choice but to play his allotted part, and in May 1781, the first of the MSS, his copy of the Nibelungenlied was sent to Berlin. (3)

(1) Cp. Goethe Jahrbuch V, p. 208. quotation from a letter to Schinz of 26 Oct 1779.

(2) Cp. J. Gröger, Die Erste Gesamtausgabe etc. ed. cit., p. 87, quotation from a letter from Müller, 30 May 1780. (Bodmer referred to Müller as Myller.)

(3) Bodmer's attitude is shown by an entry in "Bodmers Tagebuch" ed. cit. p. 212. 1781 - Müller in Berlin kam in den Paroxysm, die altschwäbischen Epiker durch den Weg von Aktien zu publicieren. Ich hatte ihm geschrieben, dass er in hiesiger Stadt Abschriften von meinen Abschriften könnte nehmen lassen; aber er sagte in seinen Programm (Dated 15 April, 1781) dass ich meine Abschriften versprochen hatte. Ich ging ungern daran, meine Manuskripte dem Zufalle zu vertrauen, doch ich wollte ihn nicht desavouieren. Ich fertigte ihm die Nibelungen zu.

Though Müller was by no means as able an editor as Bodmer would have wished, he at least fulfilled his promise that the text of the Nibelungenliedⁱⁿ would be printed. In November 1782, some five weeks before his death, Bodmer was able to examine his friend's edition, and expressed great satisfaction with it : "Die Nibelungen sind vortrefflich bearbeitet"⁽¹⁾.

The success of Müller's venture alone would have ensured that Bodmer's last thoughts of his MHG studies were happy ones. However, yet one more pleasant experience was in store for him, for on Christmas Day 1782 his friend Hirzel wrote to announce the arrival in Zürich for Bodmer's use of the Florentine MS containing Tristan and

(1) Müller's edition was entitled, Das Liet der Nibelungen, ein Ritter gedicht aus dem XIII oder XIV Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1782. An extract from Bodmer's letter of thanks written on 27 November, 1782 is quoted by J. Crüger, Die erste Gesamtausgabe etc - ed. cit., p. 102.

Müller's work did not end with his edition of the Nibelungenlied. Before his death, Bodmer had sent him copies of the Eneide & Parzival, and had promised Tristan and Iwein, as is shown by an extract from a letter, quoted by Müller in an obituary notice, which appeared at the beginning of the next section of his Sammlung deutscher Gedichte aus dem XII, XIII und XIV Jahrhundert, Berlin 1782-85. This work finally contained (besides the Nibelungenlied) : Parzival, Der Arme Heinrich, Tristan and Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation of it, Flore und Blanscheffur, Iwein, Freidank and those poems from the Jena collection of Minnelieder, which did not appear in the Sammlung von Minnesingern.

Iwein. (1) One of his very last acts before his death on 2nd January, 1783 must have been to write a letter to Oberlin in Strassburg in which he expressed his joy at this event and outlined the few tasks which remained necessary to complete his efforts to save the best of the MHG poetry :

"Einer von meinen Wünschen ist auch, dass der Wigultes des von Cravenburg in Druck kommen möchte. Erst neulich hat ein Conventual der Abtey in Einsiedeln zehn Blätter in forma quarta auf Membrana davon aufgeschürt, welche Missal und Chorbüchern zu Integumenten gedient haben; ich sehe aus diesen Fragmenten, dass in diesem Gedichte Ausbildungen sind, deren mancher von unsern gelobten Köpfen sich nicht schämen dürfte.... Ich kann mich nicht enthalten, Ihnen mein Vergnügen mit zu teilen, dass ich den Codicem membranaceum der Magliabecchischen Bibliothek auf meinem Pult habe. Der Gross herzog hat die Gnade gehabt, mir ihn anzuvertrauen. Er enthält die zwei grossen und belobten Romanzen : Tristan, Gottfrieds von Strassburg; und Laudine, Hartmanns von Ouwe. Möchte auch noch Conrads von Würzburg Romanze von Troja an das Licht treten; dann hätten wir die besten gerettet." (2)

(1) The early stages of the negotiations for this MS are obscure, but they appear to have been conducted through Hirzel and a Graf von Hohenwart, a member of the Bavarian nobility, who was tutor to the sons of the Duke of Tuscany. Hirzel's letter to Bodmer of 25 Dec 1782 was accompanied by one from Hohenwart, who explained that he had put Bodmer's case to the Duke, who graciously gave permission for the MS to be sent to Zürich. Both letters are preserved in MS Bodmer 2 of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.

(2) This extract is printed in L. Meister's Über Bodmer, ~~mit~~ nebst Fragmenten aus seinen Briefen, Zurich, 1783, pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER III

Bodmer's aesthetic and historical
appreciation of MHG poetry.

Congenial though the task of seeking out and studying examples of MHG poetry certainly was to Bodmer's naturally enquiring mind, he would hardly have devoted a life-time of persevering research to it, often in difficult circumstances, had not the material revealed by his efforts fulfilled many of the high hopes, with which he had begun his work in 1743. He had then set himself to prove that German literature of the twelfth century was able to provide an example of a natural poetry produced by a natural society, which would compare in excellence with that produced by all other natural societies, particularly with that of ancient Greece. That Bodmer should have attached special importance to the establishment of an analogy with Greek poetry is easily understandable in view of his deep indebtedness to Blackwell's Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, and in view of the fact that this poetry was universally esteemed even by those who were unfamiliar with the idea of a natural poetry. (I)

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- (I) In this he followed the example of Addison to some extent, for the English critic had supported his case for the old ballad of Chevy Chase with numerous references to the Aeneid. There were in fact so many Latin quotations in his essay that he apologized for them as follows: "I shall only beg pardon for such a profusion of Latin quotations which I should not have made so much use of, but that I feared that my own judgement would have looked too singular on such a subject." (cp. *Spectator*, ed cit., p. 322) ^{vol. I.}

The Minnelieder in the Paris MS., which came to light first were not easily susceptible of direct comparison with the Homeric epic, with which Bodmer had so far been chiefly concerned. Never-theless, he soon found that there was another kind of Greek poetry, to which it could more appropriately be likened. During the 1740ies a number of Bodmer's friends were busily engaged in writing odes in the manner of Anacreon, the fashion for which had newly spread from France. Their efforts certainly found favour in his eyes, for, in 1745, he undertook to publish a collection of anacreontic songs by Pyra and Lange, and to write a preface in which he professed to regard poetry of this kind as a model of naturalness and grace:

"Es sind dieses natürliche Menschen und redliche Freunde, welche die Grundsätze eines aufrichtigen Hertzens dem reichsten Putze des Witzes und allen gelernten Morälitäten vorziehen." (1)

In the same year, the second part of ^{Gleim's} the Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern appeared, accompanied by a lengthy preface, giving details of Anacreon's life and work, and ending with a tribute to his poetry by Anne Dacier, which Gleim translated as follows:

(1) Thirsis und Demons freundschaftliche Lieder, Zürich, 1745
p.2.

" Man findet in denselben eine solche Süßigkeit und etwas so feines und zärtliches, als man sonst nirgends findet. Alles ist darinnen schön und natürlich.... Man siehet da diejenigen lachenden Bilder, welche gewiss gefallen, weil sie mit Geschmack und Urtheil aus der blossen Natur genommen sind." (1)

This certainly dispelled any doubts Bodmer may have had as to the fact that here was another example of natural poetry.

The idea that it might be possible to find resemblances to other older and primitive poetry was not altogether new. For example, Montaigne, in his essay "Des Cannibales," had applied the adjective "anacréontique" to a poem composed by a primitive tribesman:

" Or j'ay assez de commerce avec la poésie pour juger ceci, que non seulement il n'y a rien de barbare en cette imagination, mais qu'elle est tout à fait anacréontique." (2)

Bodmer may well have known this passage. Certainly he followed its example, for, in a review of Gleim's Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern, written in September 1745, he likened the old German Minnelieder to the poetry of Anacreon and to Gleim's imitations of it, showing that the spontaneous reactions of the human mind to the subjects of love and wine, which had been treated

(1) Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern, Zweyter Theil, Berlin, 1745, pp. XXII-XXIII.

(2) Montaigne, Essais, ed. cit., p. 244.

so admirably by Anacreon, would be the same wherever natural emotions were allowed to prevail:

" Da eine jede Gemütsbewegung ihren eigenen Schwung, ihre eigenen Manieren und Ausdrücke hat, die in der Natur des Menschen liegen, so ist nicht zu verzweifeln, dass nicht die Liebe und der Wein zu allen Zeiten ungefehr dergleichen Gedanken werden in das Hertz und den Sinn gelegt haben, wie die sind, welche in den Oden des alten Anacreon und in den Scherzhaften Liedern des Hrn Gleim enthalten sind. ^{Gleim} Allein wir haben noch vor Gleimen in Deutschland, gehabt, die so empfindlich, und so zärtlich gewesen sind, als das seinige, und die das, was sie empfunden, mit Artigkeit und Natürlichkeit auszudrücken gewusst haben. In der Sammlung von Liedern aus dem zwölften Jahrhundert, welche in der königl. Bibliothek zu Paris noch in Manuscripte liegt sind vermutlich nicht wenige Lieder erhalten, die nach Anacreons und Gleims Manier und Geschmack geschrieben sind."

In order to prove his point, Bodmer then quoted three strophes from Kaiser Heinrich and translated then into modern German verse. The first stanza:

" Ich gruesse mit gesange die suessen
Die ich vermeiden niht wil noch enmac
Do ich si von munde rechte mochte gruessen
Ach leides des ist nu manic tac
Swer disiu liet singe vor ir
Der ich so unsenfteclich enbir
Es si wib oder man der habe si gegruesset von mir."

was rendered as follows:

Geh hin mein Lied und grüesse
Die liebliche, die zarte,
Der ich beständig diene,
Seitdem ich sie vergnügter
Von Munde grüssen konnte,
Sind, o der bösen Zeiten,
Viele Tage schon verlaufen,
Indessen wer dies Liedgen
Vor meinem Mädchen singt,
Das ich so ungern meide,
Der hab's von mir begrüset. (1)

In the Critische Briefe of the following year Bodmer again tried to attract the attention of the public to the poetic qualities of the Minnesang, this time by remarking on a number of especially ^{happy} turns of fancy he had found there:

" Wenn sie ihre Doris im Frühlinge auf einem Blumenfelde spatzieren geführt haben, hat es sie nicht gedüncket, das der Ort, auf den sie ihre Füße setzete, eine Empfindung davon hätte; haben nicht eine gewisse Lust empfunden, wenn sie in ihre Fusstapfen getreten? Wollten sie dann ihre Gedanken höflicher und galanter ausgebildet haben, als Kristan von Hamle in folgenden Strophen gethan hat:

Her anger was ir iuch froeiden muessen nieten
Do mine Frowe kam gegā
Und ir wissen hened begonge bieten
Nach iuwern bluomen wolgetan
Erloubet mir her gruener plan
Das ich mine fuesse sezen da mine Frowe hat gegā ."
(I)

Many more examples of this kind were adduced both here and in the Neue critische Briefe (1749), in which instances of the description of winter by modern and older poets were given. (2)

The Neue critische Briefe also contained perhaps the most interesting of all Bodmer's discussions of this topic. This is to be found in "Das Erdsännchen", the fanciful account of the discovery of the "Manessische Handschrift."

(1) Critische Briefe, ed. cit., "Von der Artigkeit in den Gedanken und Vorstellungen der Minnesinger", pp. 210-211.

(2) Neue critische Briefe, "Von den poetischen Zügen zum Lobe des Winters."

There he tells how by singing one of Hagedorn's odes he lured the dwarf who guarded the manuscript forth from his mountain stronghold. After some conversation, the little man asked for further proof of the worthiness of modern poets to be entrusted with his treasure, whereupon Bodmer launched forth ~~an~~-to a recital of strophes selected from the works of Hagedorn and Gleim, which the dwarf interspersed with passages on similar themes from MHG poetry. For instance, as Bodmer sang Hagedorn's lines:

" Nun heben sich Binsen und Keime,
Nun kleiden die Blätter und Bäume,
Nun schwindet des Winters Gestalt,
Nun rauschen lebendige Quellen,
Und tranken mit spielenden Wellen
Die Triften, den Anger, den Wald,

the dwarf chimed in:

" Der liebe sumer machet
Das dur den kle nu lachet
Manig bluome wol getan
Nu stat bekleit diu heide
Mit wunneklicher wat
Sist worden fri von leide
Mit liechter ougen weide
Maniganger schone stat."

When they had finished, the dwarf expressed his satisfaction, saying:

" Ich habe genug gehöret zu erkennen, dass die heutigen Dichter ihre Bilder und Empfindungen in eben den Quellen geschöpft haben, aus welchen meine Minnesinger sie holten."

(1) Neue kritische Briefe, ed. cit., p. 489. For the quotation from Hagedorn, see Hagedorn's Poetische Werke, ed. ci., 3. Tl p. 116.

(2) Neue kritische Briefe, ed. cit., p. 494.

When one considers that the only attempts to express emotion in lyric verse Bodmer had hitherto known in the German language were those made by poets of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it is not so very surprising that he should have regarded the anacreontic poetry of Hagedorn and Gleim and the mainly conventional examples of the Minnesang, which he had discussed in these early essays, as refreshingly spontaneous. His attitude is clearly shown in a passage of the Critische Briefe, where he compares some extracts from a number of Minnelieder with Hofmannswaldau's Heldenbriefe:

" In allen diesen Exempeln bemerken sie einen Ausdruck der aus den eigentlichen Wörtern besteht, wie der Affekt es haben will. Was vor ein Unterschied zwischen dieser Sprache, welche die deutschen Helden selbst im Affekte redeten, und derjenigen, die Hofmannswaldau ihnen in seinen erdichteten Liebes-briefen in den Mund gelegt!"

(2)

In these circumstances, it is understandable that Bodmer's reading of the Minnelieder did not reveal to him the formal quality of many of them. Nor did he receive enlightenment from other sources, for no external evidence of the social convention underlying the Minnesang seems to

(1) Bodmer's choice of examples for these essays was necessarily restricted, since he did not see the MS. until 1747. Before that he had only the 100 strophes copied by Bartenstein, of which there is no record, and the extracts made from the MS. in Bremen by Renner, which did not include the works of the greatest poets. (cp. *supra* pp 97-99.)

(2) Critische Briefe, ed. cit., p. 218.

to have reached him. Therefore he was able to interpret the relationship of the Minnesinger and the ladies, for whom they sang, solely in the terms of his theory of the intrinsic virtue of a natural society, stressing the dignified and modest bearing of the ladies, and the studious care with which their lovers guarded their reputation. (I) By comparison with twelfth-century standards, Bodmer found that even the best of modern society and its reflection in modern poetry left much to be desired. He admitted this even when his enthusiasm for modern anacreontic poetry was at its highest pitch in the 1740ies. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that in the 1750ies, when anacreontic poetry became obviously stylized and frivolous, Bodmer should no longer have cared to stress its connection with the Minnesang.

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- (I) Cp. Neue kritische Briefe ; " Von der Artigkeit in den Manieren der Mädchen, die von den schwäbischen alten Poeten besungen worden." p. 348 ;

" Mit welcher Holdseligkeit hat eine andere von dem von der Vogelweide ein Sträussgen empfangen:

'Si nam das ich ir bot
Einem kinde vil gelich das ere hat
Ir wangen wurden rot
Sam diu rose da si bi den lilien stat
Des erschanten sich ihre liechten ougen
Do neig si mir vil schone.'

Cp. also " Von einer fanatischen Liebes-probe der Minnesinger." Neue kritische Briefe, pp. 379 sqq.

Besides this Bodmer had noticed some other important points of difference between the Wäffesang and modern anacreontic poetry. In the Critische Briefe, he had remarked on some unusual turns of fancy employed by the older poets, and he stressed this point again in "Das Erdmännchen", where he mentioned the greater ability of the older poets to develop interesting detail:

"Doch habe ich einigen Unterschied bemerkt, die Alten haben sich ein wenig mehr auf absonderliche und kleine Aestgen herausgelassen, und diese macht ein Lied überaus hell."

Their superiority in this respect was, he thought, due in the main to their language:

"Sonst haben die Alten auch den Vortheil von ihrer Sprache." (1)

The immense importance which Bodmer attached to the part played by language in ensuring the excellence of poetry, is shown by a passage from the early review of Gleim's Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern (1745), in which he said:

"Wie kommt es denn, dass wir vor Gleimen wenig oder keine dergleichen anacreontischen Stücke bekommen haben. Das vornehmste Hinderniss mag wohl gewesen seyn, dass diejenigen, welche ebenso zärtliche Empfindungen und Gedanken gehabt haben, selbige mit einem steifen, gekünstelten Ausdrucke verderbt haben." (2)

(1) Neue critische Briefe, ed. cit., p. 494.

(2) Freyndliche Nachrichten, XXXVI Stück, p. 284.

Bodmer's conviction that the Minnesinger in particular had no reason to spoil their ideas by inadequate expression is made clear in "Das Erdmännchen" and in many other places in his writings :

" Sonst haben die Alten auch den Vortheil von ihrer Sprache, dass die kleinen Dinge sich darinnen ohne Niedrigkeit sagen lassen. Ihre Worte haben die Platitude noch nicht an sich genommen, die ihnen nach der Zeit in dem Munde eines barbarischen Pöbels angeklebet ist. Ich will izt dessen nicht gedenken, dass diese Sprache in den Fügungs- und Verbindungsarten kürzer und geschmeidiger ist, dass sie einen grössern Vorrath an Wörtern hat, welche, ob sie gleich sehr nahe verwandte Bilder bezeichnen, doch allezeit in einem besondern Stücke verschieden sind.....Noch einen Vortheil haben die alten Minnelieder von dem vollen Klange ihrer Worte, den die Menge der Selbst-lauter ihnen ertheilet, nachdem die Mitlauter darinnen so vielmahl dürfen verbissen werden." (1)

As has been shown, he found that his contemporaries did not enjoy quite the same linguistic advantages as their twelfth-century predecessors. The nature of the difference between the German language at these two stages of its development, as Bodmer conceived it, is subtly defined in the following passage from the preface to the Sammlung von Minnesingern:

" Die Verwandlung, die sie (die Sprache) gelitten hat, mag ungefähr in dem Verhältnisse stehen wie der Raupe, die in einem Schmetterlinge übergegangen ist; die scharfen Augen der Naturforscher entdecken in dem Schmetterlinge noch immer Züge und Gelenke der Raupe;; und es ist ganz begreiflich, dass in der Figur der Raupe, welche die Bildung des Schmetterlings in sich fasste, mehr feine und subtile Kunst vorhanden war; als in dem neuen Körper des Papillons, der izt diese geheime Anlage verlohren hat." (2)

(1) Neue critische Briefe, pp. 494-5

(2) Sammlung von Minnesingern, Erster Theil, pp. IV-V

These considerations led Bodmer to the conclusion that the improvement of modern poetry could best be encouraged by efforts to restore to the modern German language some of those admirable qualities, which had characterized the earlier period of its existence. As a first step towards the attainment of this end, he advocated a thorough examination of the resources of the older language, as it had been used by the poets of the period. in their poetry.

The character of Bodmer's general approach to the Minnesang naturally affected the methods by which he presented the poems to the public. The presentation was made in two parts: in the Proben der alten schwäbischen Poesie (1748), and in the Sammlung von Minnesingern (1758-9). The former was a selection from the contents of the Paris MS., while the latter purported to be an almost complete edition of them.

Although Bodmer did not define the principles underlying his selection of poems for inclusion in the Proben, one may reasonably assume that he took those which best illustrated his idea of the social and poetic virtues of the period. The work of fifty-seven poets was omitted altogether. (1) In general there is nothing very surprising about this, since these poets were in the main minor

(1) Fifty-three, if one excludes Tyrol v. Schotten, the Winsbeke poems and Klingschr.

representatives of the period. A random selection from the list reveals Rubin, Hardegger, Der von Scharfenberg and Der von Wildonie. However, there are some important exceptions to this general rule: Der von Kurenberg, Meinloh von Sevelingen, the Burgrave von Rietenburg and Neidhardt von Reuenthal. The omission of these poets casts a very significant light on Bodmer's idea of naturalness in poetry. He rejected the very songs which would be now considered most natural: those, in which courtly influence was not yet apparent, or had not yet fully exerted itself, and those, in which it had been cast off. Some further evidence on this point is given by the fact that Bodmer included only the most conventional of the songs attributed to Dietmar von Aist, taking no account of the early Tagelied "Slafest du fridel ziere?", nor of "Es stuont ein frouwe alleine". (1) He also omitted Walther's "Under der linden" in spite of the fact that he had praised him with the words: "er stieg mit Anständigkeit hinunter." (2) This, combined with Bodmer's readiness to maintain his opinion of the likeness between the Minnesang and modern anacreontic poetry as late as 1749, when the full contents of the Paris

(1) Cp. Proben, pp. 32-33.

(2) Proben, XXXIV

MS. were well known to him, confirms ^{the view} that the naturalness Bodmer sought and usually found in the Minnesang was that of an already cultivated society. (1)

Having decided which poets were to be included in the Proben, Bodmer then had to determine how the available space was to be allotted among them. Here his judgement appears to have been very sound in the main, for he singled out Reinmar der Alte and Walther von der Vogelweide for special attention, both in the in the matter of space, and also in his comments in the preface. There he commented on their work as follows, saying of Reinmar:

" Aus seinen Leiden blicket ein sanftmüthiges und gelindes Herz, die Gefälligkeit is seine Kunst . Sein Witz zeigt sich vielmehr in dem Schwung, den sein: Empfindungen nehmen, als in den Bildern und dem Ausdrücke. Seine Schreibart läuft in einem natürlichen ebenen gleichlaufenden Flusse fort. (2)

and of Walther:

"Er hatte den Ruhm, dass er alle Schreibarten in seiner Gewalt hatte. Er erhob sich, blieb in dem Mittel, oder er stieg mit Anständigkeit hinunter, wie es die Sache erforderte. Denn er brauchte die Poesie nicht zu Liebesklagen allein, er lobte, er tadelte, er lehrte. Er lobte erhaben, er tadelte fein, und er lehrte moralisch. Man erkennt in seiner Poesie einen Mann, der die Welt gesehen und mit den Grossen gelebt hat. In seinen verliebten Liedern entsteht die Artigkeit so gerne von dem witzigen Einfalle, als von der zärtlichen Empfindung." (3)

(1) Cp. supra pp. 156 sq. on the comparison of the Minnesang + courtly-anacreontic poetry in Neue Critische Briefe, 1749.

(2) Proben, p. XXXIII.

(3) Proben, p. XXXIV.

In Bodmer's appreciation of these two MHG poets, one finds again that unerring response to greatness, which had led him to champion Milton, Dante and Klopstock. This does much to compensate for the minor limitations of his approach to these poets. These limitations were by no means unapparent in his treatment of the poetry of Walther in the Proben.

As has been shown the selection of Walther's songs given there largely fails to give an account of that part of his love poetry, which was not entirely within the courtly convention, but otherwise the various aspects of his work were fairly represented. One finds numerous political Sprüche; some of the laments on the state of society, poetry and of his own life, such as "Owe hoveliches singen", "Owe war sind verwunden"; the crusading song, "Nu alrerst lebe ich mir werde"; and some Minnelieder, as, for example, "So die Bluomen uz dem grase dringent" and "Si wundervol gemachet wip." (This last named poem was hardly typical of the Minnesang, but Bodmer was probably struck by a likeness to the contemporary lyric.)

(1) Walther's poems are to be found on pp. 73 - 108 of the Proben. The examples given here are on pp 82, 85, 87 and 107- 108.

In the Sammlung VonMinnesingern the problem of selection did not arise, at least as far as Walther was concerned, though it did arise in other cases, and to a far greater extent than Bodmer cared to admit. He said in the preface to the second:part:

" Man wird uns auch verzeihen, dass wir bey sehr wenigen Singern einige Strophen von geringern Werthe, von wiederholten Gedancken, von yberspanntem oder anstoessigen Inhalt, in dem Manessischen Codex haben ligen lassen? Es war doch nur Achtung für die Verfasser derselben. Aller Muzen davon wäre gewesen, dass sie bewiesen hätten, dassdas schwäbische Kaiserthum hätte auch seine Dunsen gehabt wie die gegenwärtige Zeit. (1)

The " einige Strophen " actually reached eight hundred, such was Bodmer's zeal to preserve the reputation of twelfth-century poetry.

Almost as important as what Bodmer chose to present, is the way in which he chose to present it. Here his aim was to reproduce his original as nearly as possible, in order that the reader should miss nothing of the valuable content and expression of the elder poetry:

" Unsere vornehmste Sorge war für diesmal, dass wir eine sorgfältige und getreue Abschrift von der Manessischen Handschrift gäben" (2)

(1) Sammlung von Minnesingern, Zweyter Theil, p.V.

(2) Sammlung von Minnesingern, Erster Theil, p. V

He therefore gave the text as accurately as he could read it from the MS., marked the strophic divisions with capitals, as indicated there, and the rhymes by beginning a new line with a capital, and left it at that, or nearly. Apparently he failed to notice the red capitals in the MS. suggesting the grouping of the separate strophes into songs, and consequently did not presume to give any indication of this.

Admirable as this principle of fidelity to the text was, it had its drawbacks, particularly when its exponent was Bodmer. The lack of grouping of the strophes was understandable enough in the Sammlung von Minnesingern, for, with the whole of the material at their disposal, the readers could be expected to notice the divisions for themselves, but in the Proben, it was very different. There Bodmer had by no means ensured that his material gave a clear or even a very accurate impression of the shape of a MHG lyric poem. He often included only part of a poem, taking the first, third and fourth strophes as in the case of Walther's "Owe hoveliches singen" or the first three strophes, as in the case of "Alrerst nu lebe ich mir werde" (I). The effect when all these pieces were put together with no breaks between them was naturally confusing. As I have said, one would have expected less

(I) Cp. Proben, pp. 35 and 82.

in the Sammlung von Minnesingern

trouble of this kind, but in fact there was more, for by then Bodmer had begun to modify his policy of accurate reproduction of the original:

" In gegen-wärtiger Ausgabe haben wir öfters zween kurze Verse in einer Zeile vereinigt, doch dass wir die letztere mit einem grossen Buchstaben eingeführt haben; und mehrmals haben wir einen allzu langen Vers in zwe Zeilen getheilet, als ob es zween Verse wären; beydes ordnen wir so dass wir der Columne eine bessere Gestalt gäben. Einige von diesen Versen sind in der that so ungemessen lang, dass glaubwürdig wird, der Poet selbst habe sie für zwee gegeben, deren ersterer aber des Reimes beraubt ist." (1)

The use of this freedom, which Bodmer now accorded himself, made in the Sammlung von Minnesingern, shows just how little sense of verse form he possessed, and also how little idea he had as to how the strophes should be grouped. Taking again the example of Walther's "Alrerst nu lebe ich mir werde", one finds that instead of leaving the short lines as they stood in the Proben, he has taken to joining the first and the last two together. Moreover, this is done only in the first and fourth strophes. (2) This lack of feeling for the shape of a MHG poem, or for that matter of any poetry was one of the most serious drawbacks to the development of a full appreciation of the older poetry. One finds it not only in Bodmer's work on the lyric but also in that on the epic, where he was

(1) Sammlung von Minnesingern, Zweyter Theil, p.V

(2) Sammlung von Minnesingern, Erster Theil, p.104.

apparently unperturbed by the thought of rendering the
Nibelungenlied and Parzival in hexameters.

Bodmer's study of the MHG epic was inspired by the hope of finding a counterpart to the Homeric poems which he regarded as the supreme achievement of classical literature. At first he met with only limited success. He discovered that though a number of MHG poems had certain qualities in common with the Homeric epic, they also differed from it in several important respects. Among these poems was Parzival, the printed version of which came into Bodmer's possession in 1750, or thereabouts.

Bodmer valued Parzival, as he had valued the Minnesang, chiefly for the light it cast on twelfth-century society and for the power of poetic expression it revealed. In the preface to Der Parsival (1753) he referred to the sociological interest of the poem as follows:

" Man hat mit dieser Arbeit den Spähern der Menschen einige neue Aussichten legen wollen, massen die Gedanken, die Lebens-art, und die Grundregeln keine anderen sind, als der Leute, die in den Zeiten der Kaiser aus dem schwäbischen Hause gelebet haben." (I)

One assumes that Bodmer intended, partly at least, to imply that the manners of this period were worthy of study as a moral example, but he did not actually say this. Certainly his approach here would seem to have been somewhat freer of moral bias than that to the Minnesang had been. The note of sheer pleasure in discovery, which was heard in much of

(I) Der Parsival, ed.cit., p.3.

Bodmer's early work, was repeated in at least one essay of this period- that on Apollonius' Argonautica, - which was included with some essays on Parzival in the second edition of the Gedichte in gereimten Versen:

" Also finden wir in seinem Werk eine Menge von mythologischen Zerimonien und Einsezungen von Opfergebräuchen für mich, der den Menschen gern in allen seinen Gestalten siehet, der ihm mit Vergnügen in das entfernteste Alter, und die entlegensten Zonen folget, liegen hierinn Schönheiten, die ihren Reiz in unsern veränderten Zeiten an mir nicht verlohren haben." (1)

In these circumstances it seems that the strange mediaeval scene presented in Parzival may well have appealed to Bodmer's lively curiosity. At any rate he undertook to defend some of its aspects to his readers on historical grounds; explaining that the beliefs, which to the eighteenth century appeared to be mere superstition, were quite seriously held in the twelfth century:

" Und die Wunder-werke, die Sternenkkräfte, die bezauberten, oder wie sie damals hiessen, die gelüpten Waffen, und die necromantischen Künste, waren ganz gewöhnliche Ideen. Daher kam, dass die Erdichtungen die darauf gebaut sind, für wahrscheinlich genug hielt, und einen allgemeinen Geschmack daran fand." (2)

(1) Gedichte in gereimten Versen. Zweyte Auflage, Zürich, 1754, P. 131.

(2) Der Parsival, ed. cit., p. 3.

But sympathetic as Bodmer's historical understanding was there were elements in Parzival which he could not bring himself to regard as other than absurdly fantastic: " Die Natur muss oftmals der Abentheuer weichen."⁽¹⁾ The story of Gawain, which he dubbed " eine wilde Erzählung"⁽²⁾, struck him as a particularly blatant example.

However, the language in which the fantastic content of parts of the poem were expressed did much to reconcile Bodmer to it:

" Aber diese abentheuerlichen Geschichten werden mit einem grossen Reichtum der Sprache und einer angenehmen Einfalt der Bilder und Vorstellungen erzählt,"⁽³⁾

Above all he admired Wolfram's gift for metaphor. A number of examples of it were singled out for quotation in the preface to the modern version Der Parsival:

" Ich will darum etliche Stellen anführen, welche zur Beglückung dienen, dass dieser Poet gewisse Gedanken und Bilder gehabt hat, welche man vielleicht am wenigsten bei ihm gesucht hätte."⁽⁴⁾

Among these were:

" Partzival niht eine lag
Geselliclich unz an den tag
War bi im strenge arebeit
Ir botten kynftige leit
Santen im im schlafe dar.

(1), (2), and (3) Gedichte in gereimten Versen, p.140.

(4) Der Parsival, ed cit., p.4.

Vil kerzen und die varwe sin
 Gaben ze gegenstrite schin.

Umbe den wurf der sorgen
 Wart getopelt do er den gral fand
 Mit ougen ane hand
 Und ane wyrfels eke." (I)

Though Bodmer had regarded the peculiarly mediaeval characteristics of the content of Parzival with a tolerant eye, he was not so ready to excuse the unfamiliar structure of the poem, since here he found a serious departure from the ideal set up by Homer. It seemed to him that Wolfram showed a sad neglect of epic unity of action, when he began his story before the birth of his hero and not only went all through his early life, but also introduced the stories of persons only remotely connected with the main theme:

"Das Gedicht ~~Parzival~~ wird noch früher als ab ovo angefangen, man erzählt zuerst die ritterlichen Thaten Gamurets des Vaters unsers Helden, man lässt diesen zweimal verliebt werden, und Parcival ist die Frucht seiner zweiten Liebe. Dann gibt man uns die Geschichte seiner Kindheit, und meldet uns wie Gurnemanz ihn Wiz gelehrt habe. Die ganze Geschichte Gawans wird neben der seinen eingeführt, ohne dass sie anders an der selbigen hange."

(2)

(1) Der Parsival, ed.cit., p.4.

Cp. Parzival und Titurel, ed. E. Martin, Halle, 1900.
 245.1-5; 243.9-10 and 248.10-13.

(2) Gedichte in gereimten Versen, ed cit., p, 140

Nevertheless, Bodmer discerned at least the beginnings of a satisfactorily unified plot in that part of the poem which directly concerned the Grail:

" Was izt die Erfindung der Fabel selbst anbelanget, so ist eine Art von Knoten darinnen; der Leser wird in suspenso gehalten; es gibt da viele Abschiede geliebter Freunde, und Wiederkünfte. Die vornehmste Handlung ist, dass Amfortas an einer Wunde geheilet werde, die er von Ypomedon empfangen hatte. Er war Vogt und Pfleger des Grales; und wäre längst an der Wunde gestorben, wenn man ihn nicht mit Arzneyen gestärcket und ihn zu gewissen Zeiten den Gral hätte anschauen lassen. Durch den Gral wurden alle Reichtümer, alle Kostbarkeiten, und alle Schönheiten der Natur demjenigen eigen, der ihn besass; was er wünschte war gleich da. Vor Amfortas hatte Frimutel, sein Vater, ihn besessen; doch war er nicht erblich, sondern Gott ernannte seine Besizer. Man hatte ihm zu Monsalvatsche einen Orden gestiftet der gewissermassen mit der Tavelrunde eiferte. Die Ritter hiessen Templeise d.i. Tempelherrn, und ritten in dem Dienste des Grales auf Abentheuer, wie jene in dem Dienste der Minne und Ehre. Der Poet macht ~~ihnen~~ den grössten Aufwand, den seine Phantasie und seine Gelauntheit im Vorrath hatten, die Pracht und den Pomp der Monsalvatsche zu beschreiben. Sie hatten durch den Gral vernommen, Amfortas würde geheilet werden, wenn ein Ritter unwissend in das Schloss käme und um die Wunder des Schlosses fragte; und derselbe würde ihm dann im Besize des Grales folgen. Parzival kam auf das Schloss, aber aus Furcht ^{vor} vorwitzig angesehen zu werden, erkundigte er sich nicht darum. Er musste deswegen manchen höhnischen Verweis einnehmen, und er wäre bald in Verzweiflung gestürzt. Doch an einem Charfreytage besann er sich besser, und Trevrisent, der Einsiedler ^{sein Vertrauen} er, beruhigte seinen Geist völlig wieder, dass er der Vorsehung ^{sein Vertrauen} wiedergab. Nach vielen Abentheuern, die er dapper und christlich vollendete, wird die Botschafterin des Grales, Frau Kundrie La Sursiere, an ihn abgefertigt, ihn nach Monsalvatsche abzuholen. Sie hatte eine Constellation wahrgenommen, die anzeigte, Gott hätte ihn zum Vogt und Pfleger des Grales ernannt. Sobald er auf Monsalvatch angekommen, liess er sich den Gral zeigen, und fiel vor ihm anbetend auf die Knie, und bat um die Gesundheit des verwundeten Königs. Gott

hörete sein Gebeth; Amfortas ward gesund, und trat ihm die Bedienung der Grales ab." (I)

As has been shown already, Bodmer made no attempt to publish even part of the text of Parzival. By 1750, the reception ^{of the Proben} had made it clear that public interest would not be sufficient to warrant such a venture, especially with a poem the character of which was far more noticeably mediaeval than that of the Minnesang. In spite of this, Bodmer might have been more daring, had he been more fully convinced of the merits of the work. However, the lack of unity in the plot caused him such serious misgivings that one suspects that, even had he undertaken an edition, he would have made selections in order to minimise this fault. This was certainly his method in Der Parsival, a version in modern German hexameters, the content of which he restricted to the Grail story, as he had outlined it in the above quotation, except that he included Parzival's encounter with Feirefis.

Bodmer divided his epic of Parzival in-to two cantos. (The division into books was not made in the printed version of 1477, from which he worked.) After invoking the Muse he proceeded straightway to an account of

of Parzival's meeting with the fisherman and of his stay at the Gralburg. The content and expression of this part of the poem seems to have afforded Bodmer particular pleasure, for he lingered over it, translating the description of the scenes at the Grail feast word for word as far as the modern metre would allow. An idea of his faithfulness to his original in this part of the poem is given by his version of one of the metaphorical passages which he had given in the original in his preface:

" Parzival schlummerte ein. Als die edlen Knaben das
 sahen
 Stellten sie auf den Teppich die Kerzen nieder und
 wichen.
 Aber er lag nicht allein; bei ihm im Bett war die
 Nacht durch
 Strenge Arbeit, dem schlafenden sandt kynftiges
 Unglyk
 Seine Traüme; die Schlaege vom Schwerdt und Stosse
 vom Speere
 Brausten ihm um sein Haupt, und trafen alle Glied-
 massen." (I)

The first canto closed with Parzival's meeting with Sigune after his departure from the Gralburg and his discovery of his guilt. (2)

(1) Der Parsival, ed.cit., p.16
 Cp. supra p. 172.

(2) The first canto, pp. 7-25, covers Bk.V, 224.I - 256.8 in Martin's edition of Parzival.

The second canto was drawn mainly from books IX, XV, and XVI, but it began with a brief extract from book VI, a joust with Kay, in which Parzival's prowess as a warrior was displayed. Thereafter came the meeting with Trevrisent and the restoration of Parzival's faith, his encounter with Feirefis; their visit to King Arthur's court; and the arrival of Cundrie to announce Parzival's succession to the Grail-kingship. The poem closes with the return to Monsalvaesche, the healing of Amfortas and the reunion of Parzival with his wife and children. (1)

(1) The second canto, pp. 26-48, covers:

p. 26.....	Bk. VI	296.13	-	297.29
pp. 26-34..	Bk. IX	434.20	-	502. 22
pp. 35- 43.	Bk. XV	734.	-	786
pp. 44- 48.	Bk. XVI	787.1	-	867. 10

About five years after he had obtained Parzival, Bodmer received MS.C of the Nibelungenlied. His reading of the first part of the poem ~~already~~ convinced him that here was something different from and superior to the other MHG epic poems he knew. Though the fantastic element, to which he had objected in Parzival, was not excluded, it was reduced, and the general impression was one of great lucidity. He refers to:

" Das Abenteuerliche, und Unglaubliche, das in diesen abgerissenen Stücken herrschet, ~~das~~ in dem Geschmacke der Zeiten des Verfassers ist, und mit den Erdichtungen des von Ofterdingen (Heldenbuch) und einiger anderer verglichen noch sehr bescheiden ist..." (1)

and to:

" eine grosse Klarheit und Einfalt, Sachen, die bei allen Völkern und in allen Zeiten viel gegolten haben." (2)

As he read on, Bodmer's satisfaction with his discovery increased, for he found that, especially in the latter part, from the arrival of the Burgundians at Rüdiger's castle, there were numerous examples of those qualities which contemporary critics had praised most highly in Homer.

The unknown poet of the Nibelungenlied proved himself to be also a master of the art of poetic invention. In his case, as in that of Homer, the power of poetic invention was

(1) Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage, ed. cit., p.VII.

(2) Freymüthige Nachrichten, XI Stück, (1756), p.94.

chiefly in his highly diverse descriptions of individual characters and events, specially of warlike characters and battles:

" Der Inhalt ist nicht weniger kriegerisch als Homers Ilias; wir haben da Helden von verschiedenem Character, von verschiedener Art-en der Dapferkeit, und jegliche wird durch anstandige Reden und Handlungen sehr geschickt ausgebildet.....Auch die Arten von Gefecht sind nicht weniger Mannigfaltig." (1)

" Die Dapferkeit erscheint hier in einer wunderbaren Verschiedenheit bei verschiedenen Personen; eine andere ist Rüdegers, eine andere Blüdelins, eine andere Hagenen, des Volkers, Dietrichs von Bern. In der Beschreibung der Kämpfe herrscht eine Mannigfaltigkeit von Begegnissen, so dass schwerlich ein Kampf, ein Gefecht dem andern gleich ist. Jedes neue Gefecht erhebt sich über das vorhergehende an Grösse, an Gefahr, an Verwirrung." (2)

A glance at Pope's preface to his translation of the Iliad soon reveals that the views on Homer here expressed by Bodmer were by no means original. A comparison of the above passages with the following from Pope shows that at times Bodmer went so far as to translate from him:

" Nothing is so surprising as the Descriptions of his Battels, which take up no less than half the Iliad, and are supplied with so vast a variety of incidents, that no one bears a likeness to another; such different kinds of deaths, that no two heroes are wounded in the same way; and such a profusion of noble Ideas that every Battel rises above the last in greatness, horror and confusion.".....

The single quality of Courage is wonderfully diversified in the several characters of the Iliad That of Achilles is furious and intractable, that of Diomede forward"(3)

(1) Freytag's Nachrichten, XII Stück (1756) p. 92b.

(2) Chriemhilden Rache, ed. cit., p.VII.

(3) Pope, The Iliad, London, 1715, preface, without pagin.

This dependence on Pope does Bodmer no dishonour. He made no claim to be an original thinker, but he was always quick to recognise a good idea and, moreover to perceive its relevance to his own peculiar interests. This had been the case with Blackwell's Enquiry, and it was the same here./ Para. Having made these general statements as to the likeness between the Nibelungenlied and the Iliad, particularly in respect of character-study, Bodmer proceeded to make an independent examination of the facts of the case in his own particular sphere. Two long essays in the Freyndthige Nachrichten of 1757 were devoted to an analysis of the differences between the individual characters in the Nibelungenlied, and of the mixture of qualities within those individual characters:

" Die Personen haben alle den Character der Tapferkeit aber in verschiedenen Graden und mit gewissen Zusätzen. Dieses ist schwerer, als wenn man die Character allein durch den Contrast oder das Widerspiel vervielfältiget. Wenn er einer Person etwas hassenswürdiges gegeben, so hat er ihr daneben andere Eigenschaften gegeben, die diese verringern. Chriemhilden wütende Rachgier wird durch die grosse Liebe zu Sivrids, durch Sivrids grosse Verdienste, und durch die Schändlichkeit des mörderischen Überfalles gerechtfertiget; zudem dass sie sie die andern gern geschonet hätte, wenn sie sich von Hagen geschieden hätten. Wir wissen es Hagenen Dank, dass er für die Grossmuth, mit welcher Rüdeger ihm sein Schöld überlässt, erkläret, er wolle sich alles Übels gegen ihm begeben.... Und es hat uns gefallen, dass wir die religiösen Empfindungen bey ihm gehört haben: Meine theuere Herren, meine Anverwandten und Freunde, ihr sollet zur Kirche gehen und Gott eure Noth klagen." (I)

(I) Freyndthige Nachrichten, XI Stück, (1757), p.84.

The above quotation shows that Bodmer found in the Nibelungenlied, not only skill in the delineation of character but also examples of nobility of character. The virtuous traits, which appeared even in Chriemhild and Hagen, were multiplied many times in the almost completely virtuous characters of Dietrich and Rüdiger. Rüdiger in particular claimed Bodmer's affection:

" Rüdiger erscheint in dem liebenswürdigsten Licht; über seinen Muth geht nichts als seine Milde. Sein freundschaftliches Herz gewinnt ihm aller Huld. Von einem so menschlichen, so leutseligen Character weiss die Ilias wenig, und die Krieger selbst in unsern höflichen Zeiten bleiben unleugbar hinter ihm zurücke."

(1)

Here, for the very first time, Bodmer claimed superiority for the MHG over the Homeric epic. Moreover, here at least he can lay claim to originality. Instead of being indebted to an English critic, he this time foreshadowed the work of one - Richard Hurd, whose Letters on Chivalry and Romance of 1762, brought a full development of the idea suggested by Bodmer. After drawing an analogy between the Iliad and Tasso's Gierusalemme Liberata, Hurd said: that where the Homeric and Gothic epics differed, it was to the advantage of the latter. He compared the-

" boistrous passions, which are provoked and kept alive from one end of the Iliad to the other, by every imaginable scene of rage, revenge and slaughter."

(2)

with the Gothic romances, in which-

(1) Freymüthige Nachrichten, 1757, p. 94 a.

(2) R. Hurd, Letters on Chivalry and Romance, ed. E. Morley. London, 1911, p. 109.

"the gentler and the more interesting affections are awakened in us by the most elevating displays of love and friendship; of love elevated to its noblest heights; and of friendship, operating on the purest motives." (1)

The question of the delineation of character also played an important ^{part} in another essay, in which Bodmer sought to defend the Nibelungenlied against the attacks of some less enlightened critics of the day, who, though they professed to admire the classics showed no real appreciation of them, more particularly of their relationship to their historical background. Batteux, for example, claimed that since the Ancients had introduced the Gods into their epic poetry, divine intervention was therefore an essential part of epic machinery, without which the necessary element of the marvellous would be lost. Bodmer saw that by these standards the MHG epic had no claim to be called epic poetry:

"Wahr ist es, man müste ihm den Nahmen der Epopoe abprechen, wenn nach der Meinung des Batteux das Wunderbare das eigenthümliche Unterscheidungszeichen, und wie er sagt, das Wesen der Epopoe wäre und zwar das Wunderbare, das von der Zwischen-kunft der Gottheit entsteht.

Wir haben in der Rache keine Verrichtungen der Gottheit. Es ist die Rache einer sterblichen Frau, welche sie durch sehr menschlich Mittel verübet. Der Poet hat zwar auch Wunderbares aber von einer andern Art. Es hat ihn zu geringfügig gedünckt

(1) Letters on Chivalry and Romance, ed.cit., p. 109.

seltsame und ausserordentliche Thaten mit der kleinen Absicht zu erdichten, damit er die Neugierigkeit des Lesers unterhalte, welches den Romanzen und Marchen besser ansteht." (1)

In any case, Bodmer said, Batteux had entirely missed the point of the classical use of the Gods. The Ancients had not introduced them because they thought them essential to epic poetry, but simply because their superstitious readers believed in such things and liked to find them in their poetry. He continued:

" Allezeit bleibt falsch, dass die Zwischenkunft der Gottheit das Wesen der Epopoe ausmache. Sie ist ein moralisches Werk, welches die guten und die schlimmen Wirkungen verschiedener Character und Meinungen vorstellig machet.....die Epopoe nimmt ihre Personen auf der erhabenen und vortrefflichen Welt; diese erzählt nur, was jene (Tragödie, Comödie) vor die Sinnen bringen, doch thut sie dieses so, dass sie durch die Kraft ihrer Beschreibungen die Personen nach ihrer Gestalt, Mine und Geberde, so lebhaft abmalet, als ob wir sie vor Augen sähen; und uns ihre eigensten Reden mit Entfernung des Poeten hören lässt. Also ist ihr Wesen, ihre Natur, ihr wesentliches Amt, das menschliche Gemüth zu offen-baren, die Springfedern der Handlungen, die mannigfaltigen Gemüthsbewegungen, von welchen das gute oder böse Betragen der Menschen entstehet, auseinander zu setzen." (2)

Bodmer's analysis of the characters in the Nibelungenlied had already shown him that the poet was highly skilled in revealing the springs of human action; and, moreover he found that his account had that same impersonal dramatic quality, which was so marked in the Iliad:

(1) Freyndthige Nachrichten, X Stück, 1757, p.75.

(2) Freyndthige Nachrichten, X Stück, 1757, pp. 75-76.

" Der Poet hat auch dieses mit dem Griechen gemein, dass er uns selten an den Poeten Gedencken lässt; er nimmt uns allein mit seiner Handlung ein, und machet uns aus Lesern zu Hörern." (1)

Here again Bodmer's remark on this quality in Homer's work was probably not original, for Shaftesbury had said something very similar in his Characteristics.⁽²⁾ Nevertheless Bodmer's acceptance of it and his discerning application of it to another poem do credit to his critical insight.

The resemblances to ^oHomeric poetry so far described alone would have afforded Bodmer considerable satisfaction, but his pleasure was to be increased immeasurably by the discovery that the similarity was maintained even in those respects where the mediaeval epic usually fell short.

In his defence of the Nibelungenlied against the theory of Batteux, he remarked that the poet did not descend to the artifices, by which the writers of romance tried to arouse the curiosity of their readers. Even in the inferior first part of the poem he found considerably less of those fantastic elements, which marked other mediaeval epic poetry, and in the latter part he found that it had all but disappeared:

" Das Abenteuerliche und Unglaubliche wird in der Rache, die wir allein liefern, nur mit sparsamer Hand angebracht. Wenn man die übermässige Zahl der Krieger heruntersetzte, und einige andere Sachen von dieser Art mässigte so würden wir ein Werk

(1) Chriemhilden Rache, p.VII - VIII

(2) Cp. Shaftesbury, Characteristics, ed. Robertson, London, 1900, pp. 129- 130.

bekommen, in welchem der kindischen Neigung zu dem Übersteigenden und dem falschen Wunderbaren am wenigsten geschmeichelt wäre." (1)

His enthusiasm rose to its greatest height when he saw that greater simplicity of content brought greater clarity of outline, that the latter part of the poem at least fully met his requirements of the unity of epic action:

" Das Gedicht von Chriemhilden Rache ist der hinterste Theil eines Werkes, welches der Verfasser Das Liet der Nibelungen betitelt hat..... Dann folgen die Abschnitte, die eigentlich Chriemhilden Rache betreffen, und die für sich eine ganze Handlung ausmachen. Mit dieser Rache hängen die fürdern Begegnisse nicht genauer zusammen, als wie alle Geschäfte im Leben solcher Personen, die miteinander Umgang haben, gewissermassen verknüpft sind. Diese Weitläufigkeit gehört sich für die Biographos. Die Poeten hatten beobachtet, dass der Mensch nicht in allen Zeitpunkten seines Lebens gleich stark beschäftigt ist, und dass ihm nur bisweilen solche Sachen in den Weg kommen, die ihn zu einem absonderlichen Unternehmen vermögen und die eine Folge von Regungen, Gedanken und Entschlüssen, bey ihm verursachen; die so lange sie währen, ihn in einer besondern Handlung verwickelt zeigen, die bey der Begebenheit anfängt, die ihn zuerst auf diese Vornehmen geführt hat, und die dann endigt, als diese besondere Sache sein Gemüth nicht mehr benimmt.

Von dieser Einheit der Handlung, und diesem Ganzen hatten Eschilbach und seine Zeitgenossen, die erzählende Gedichte geschrieben haben, keinen Begriff. Sie glaubten vielmehr, sie mussten das Leben ihrer Helden von ihrer Geburt an bis zum Tode entfalten und sie sind sehr sorgfältig sich zu entschuldigen, wenn sie uns einige Nachrichten davon mangeln lassen. Also war es nicht die Kunst des Poeten, oder seine Erkenntniss der Regeln von der Einheit und dem Ganzen oder Empfindung der grossen Wirkungen, die daher entstehen; es war nur Instinkt oder Genie, die ihn mächtig leiteten, dass wir in der Rache der Chriemhilde eine volle und ausgebreitete, und doch nur eine Handlung bekommen haben." (2)

(1) Chriemhilden Rache, p. VII

(2) " " " , p. III and V.

Bodmer's somewhat patronising assumption that the author of the Nibelungenlied was not conscious of what he was doing when he created the last part of the poem was caused by the consideration that, had he known, he would have done the same in the first part. No other possibility seems to have occurred to him:

" Hätt' er diesen Begriff gehabt, so wäre es ihm leicht gewesen, die meisten vorhergehenden Geschichte mit diesem Stücke der Rache so zu vereinigen, dass die Einheit dieser Handlung nicht darunter gelitten hätte. Er hätte Chriemhilden nur eine vertraute Person an dem hünischen Hofe, Herraten oder eine andere, zugeben können, der sie dieselben erzählt hätte. Dieses hätte zum Theil in der Zeit geschehen können, da die Nachricht an dem Hof gekommen war, dass ihre königlichen Brüder angekommen wären, zum Theil nachdem die Königin ihnen die ersten Anzeigen ihres verbitterten Herzens gegeben hatte. Er hätte sie diese Erzählung grösstentheils mit der Ausbildung können verrichten lassen, mit welcher er sie in seiner eigenen Person gethan hat." (1)

In his edition of the poem Bodmer took it upon himself to do what the author had failed to do:

" Alle diese Stücke habe ich abgeschnitten, und ich glaube mit demselben Recht, mit welchem Homer die Entführung der Helena, die Aufopferung der Iphigenia, und alle Begegnisse der zehn Jahre, die vor dem Zwiste zwischen Achilles und Agamemnon vorhergegangen sind, weggelassen hat, auf die er nur bey Gelegenheiten sich als auf bekannte Sachen bezieht." (2)

(1) and (2) Chriemhilden Rache, p. VI. pp. V-VI and VII

Chriemhilden Rache was put first, then the Klage, in which Bodmer found a likeness to the last canto of the Iliad, and finally some extracts from the 3rd, 5th, 10th 14th and 15th Aventiuren, dealing with Siegfried's arrival in Worms, his first meeting with Chriemhild, Gunther's marriage to Brunhilde, the quarrel between the queens, Chriemhild's revelation to Hagen of Siegfried's vulnerability, and Giselher's opposition to the plan to kill Siegfried. It is difficult at first to see why Bodmer should have omitted Siegfried's death, but he was perhaps inspired by a desire to preserve the noble atmosphere of the poem. This certainly seems feasible in view of the fact that he chose to include the far less important incident showing the humanity of Giselher.

A selection from the contents of the Nibblungenlied on these lines would have not in any case have been inappropriate since Bodmer had certainly seized upon the part most worthy of presentation to the public, but one's impression of his motives is rather spoiled when one reads his very harsh condemnation of the first part of the poem and his conclusion that "Man siehet in der that keinen Anschein, dass er jemals werde ganz gedruckt werden."
(I)

However, the unfavourable impression is mitigated when one remembers that Bodmer later proved his own prophecy false, that the major efforts of his last years were devoted to obtaining a complete copy of the poem, which he saw printed before he died. His efforts were of course strongly inspired by the desire to preserve the text after his death, but there was also some indication of a change of heart, for though Bodmer still talked of remodelling the poem in order to give it psychological unity, he was now sufficiently interested in the first part to recast the episodes of Siegfried's death and the crossing of the Danube in ballad form. (1)

Bodmer's treatment of the verse form of the poem and of the language is on familiar lines. He did not recognise the Nibelungen-strophe from MS. C., in which it is certainly not immediately noticeable, and therefore began a new line after each rhyme, as in the Sammlung von Minnesingern. (2) His characterization of the language of the Nibelungenlied, on the other hand, does great credit to his discernment of the spirit of the poem:

"Wie der wesentliche Unterschied unter den Sprachen, der gewiss einen tiefern Grund hat, als die Töne der Wörter von dem verschiedenen Geschmacke entsteht, den ein Volk an den Fügungen und Wendungen der Wörter hat, die es nach eigenen Begriffen bestimmt und gebraucht; so muss sich aus der absonderlichen Eigenschaft und dem Genie einer Sprache notwendig auf den Geist und Gemüthsart einer Nation schliessen lassen. Wenn ich die Abkürzungen, Abbeissungen, Verschweigungen betrachte, so in dieser Sprache vorkommen, so kann ich mich nicht entbrechen zu glauben, dass der Geist dieser Leute welche sie eingeführt und geliebt haben, ganz gelenk,

(1) Cp. supra p. 148.

(2) He recognised it later from MS. A. cp. Lit. Pamphlete, 1781 where a strophe is quoted

fertig und feurig gewesen sey. Diese idiotischen Schünge^W diese vielfältigen Wegfälle von der p^untktlichen Ordnung nicht der Wörter allein sondern auch der Begriffe, zeigen einen Geist, der forteilt, der den Weg sich durch-haut, der ohne Mühe ergänzt und hinzu denkt, was ihm überlassen wird." (I)

An interesting light is cast upon Bodmer's appreciation of the Nibelungenlied by the way in which he treated the matter of its Germanic origin. He had perceived a likeness between the first part of the story and the account of the events recorded in the prose Edda by the historian Torfaeus in his Historia Rerum Norwegicarum. (2) This information apparently aroused no response in Bodmer beyond the fact that he recorded it as another example of the way in which MHG poets got their material:

Die^{war} "Es war Gewohnheit dieser Dichter, dass sie eine münchische Legende, eine Romanze, eine runische oder scandinavische Sage durch kleine Umstände, naive Ausbildungen, Sittensprüche in die Länge zöhlten." His lack of enthusiasm for this aspect of the poem serves to emphasize the extent to which his mind was set on the universal aesthetic and moral qualities, which most closely linked older German poetry with that of Homer.

Though Bodmer's later appreciation of MHG poetry did not lack saving graces, it brought nothing new, and in some cases, a falling off from the standard of his earlier work. His best had been given by 1760, and he must be judged by that. For all its limitations it was a truly wonderful achievement- the triumph not of a creative, but of an appreciative genius.

(1) Chriemhilden Rache, pp. 62-63. (3) Litterarische Denkmale,
 (2) " " p. VIII Zürich, 1779, pp 2-3.

Conclusion.

Bodmer's successors in the field of MHG studies were by no means unaware of the debt of gratitude they owed him. As early as 1777, in the essay "Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Poesie", Herder showed a genuine understanding of Bodmer's aims and methods. He lamented the fact, that even the fine example of the Sammlung von Minnesingern, had failed to inspire the German people to interest in their older poetry :

"Sage ich unrecht, oder ist nicht das Exempel vööllig dagewesen? Als der Manessische Codex ans Licht kam, welch ein Schatz von deutscher Sprache, Dichtung, Liebe und Freude erschien in diesen Dichtern des schwaebischen Zeitalters! Wenn die Namen Schoepflin und Bodmer kein Verdienst mehr hätten, so müsste sie dieser Fund, und den letzten die Mühe, die er sich gab, der Eifer, den er bewies, der Nation lieb und theuer machen."

He realized that the lack of public interest was partly due to Bodmer's method of presenting the text; nevertheless he stoutly defended the principle of faithfulness to the original, which had inspired that method, saying :

"Wäre Bodmer ein Abt Millot, der den Sächlenfleiss eines Curne de St. Palaye in einer Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours nach gefälligstem Auszüge hat verwandeln wollen, vielleicht wäre er weiter umher gekommen, als jetzt, da er den Schatz selbst gab und uns zutraute, dass wir uns nach dem Bissen schwabischer Sprache, leicht hinauf bemühen würden." (1)

(1) "Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst" (1777), J.G. Herder, Sämmtliche Werke, ed. B. Suphan, Berlin, 1843, vol. 9 pp. 527-528.

In 1793, he again returned to this point :

"Bodmer hatte recht, dass er diese Sprache so hoch priess und Umbildungen dieser Gedichte nicht versuchte; sie sind äusserst schwer, ja fast unmöglich --- Lesen Sie die Gedichte selbst und gewöhnen Sie sich an die Mundart dieses Zeitalters --- und Sie werden über die fliessende Anmut und Süßigkeit der alten deutschen Sprache erstaunen --- die Gewächse ihrer Poesie sind zwar sehr verschieden, bald ansehnliche Stämme, schöne fruchtbare Bäume, bald kleine niedliche Gesträuche, hie und da auch ein verworrenes Gebüsch nicht ohne Unkraut; im Ganzen aber ist und bleibt dies dichterische Zeitalter ein Phänomenon in der deutschen Geschichte."

Here too he put forward a definite proposal for the combination of fidelity to the MHG original with convenience to the student, showing that even in this Bodmer had set a good, though inadequate, example in the Proben der alten schwäbischen Poesie."

"Der verdienstreiche Bodmer gab zuerst Proben dieser Poesie mit einer kleinen Grammatick, einem Glossarium, und einigen Nachrichten so viel er sie damals haben konnte; er war dabei auf einem guten Wege. Bei der Manessischen Sammlung ward ihm das Werk zu schwer, er gab sie ohne Glossarium, ohne erläuternde Anmerkungen, sogar ohne Unterscheidung der Lieder heraus, blos und genau wie er sie in der Handschrift fand. Das war nun freilich zu einem leichten, angenehmen und nützlichen Gebrauch dieser Gedichte dem Leser zu viel zugemuthet, von ihm zu viel erwartet." (1)

Herder's suggestion was that a future editor should assemble all the material available in the existing MSS, noting alternative readings, particularly where they showed dialect differences. The text, he thought, should be accompanied by some kind of linguistic aid;

(1) "Andenken an einige ältere deutsche Dichter", Zerstreute Blätter, Fünfte Sammlung, Gotha, 1793. Herder's Werke, ed. cit., vol. 16 pp. 192 sqq., p.212.

by a commentary on the form of the poems, particularly on their musical accompaniment, and by notes on the cultural background. Herder himself did not ^{so} purpose to attempt this task, but he provided a considerable body of information for the study of the relationship between MHG poetry and the age in which it was produced, in an early essay of 1778 "Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker", and in that part of the Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, which dealt with the Middle Ages. (1)

The task of furthering Bodmer's work on the texts was left to the next generation.

The Romanticists, like Herder, were quick to realise Bodmer's merit. A. W. Schlegel expressed something of their feeling, when, in 1804, he compared Bodmer's work for older poetry with Klopstock's, to the detriment of Klopstock :

"Bodmer war hierin weit mehr auf dem rechten Wege : ohne so viel Aufheben von Patriotismus aber mit acht-deutscher Schlichtheit hat sich dieser ehrwürdige Mann das unsterbliche Verdienst gemacht, die Lieder der Minnesinger durch den Druck vor dem Untergange zu sichern, und das ganz in Vergessenheit gerathene Gedicht der Nibelungen wieder zu entdecken." (2)

Until 1838, Bodmer's Sammlung von Minnesingern was the only edition of the Paris MS, and was therefore an

(1) "Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst etc.", see Herder's Werke, ed. cit., vol. 8, pp. 385 sqq., and Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, vol. 14.

(2) A. W. Schlegel, Vorlesungen, Dritter Theil, 1803-04, "Geschichte der Romantischen Literatur". DLD des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, no. 19 (Heilbronn, 1884) p. 26.

object of close study. Its new readers fully agreed with Herder, that Bodmer's principle of faithfulness to his original was a right one. (This was a cardinal point even in Tieck's Minnelieder of 1803, where modern German versions of the poems were given)⁽¹⁾ Their only complaint, as they went more deeply into the subject, was that Bodmer had not been true enough to his own principle. In 1809, Friedrich von der Hagen published the results of a comparison of Bodmer's text with the original in Paris, which showed that at least a seventh of the original had been omitted and that the reproduction of the rest was by no means faultless.⁽²⁾ This discovery confirmed Von der Hagen's intention to embark upon a new edition. The task was a long one, for he decided to publish, not only the Paris MS, but also all the others known to Bodmer, and those which had since come to light; and those provide a full commentary on every aspect of the subject. His Minnesinger, which finally appeared in 1838, superseded the Sammlung von Minnesingern, for it realized the ideal, of which Bodmer's edition was an imperfect expression.

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- (1) L. Tieck, Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter, Berlin, 1803.
 - (2) Museum für altddeutsche Literatur und Poesie und Kunst, Berlin, 1809. The investigation of the MS was undertaken by G.W. Rassmann, who copied the strophes omitted by Bodmer, which Von der Hagen reprinted here.
 - (3) Minnesinger, Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, aus allen bekannten Handschriften und früheren Drucken gesammelt und berichtet, mit den Lesarten derselben; Geschichte des Lebens der Dichter und ihrer Werke, Sangweisen der Lieder, Reimverzeichnis der Anfänge und Abbildungen sammtlicher Handschriften, Vier Theile, Leipzig, 1838.

In his praise of Bodmer, A. W. Schlegel coupled the preservation of the Minnesang with the discovery of the Nibelungenlied. This latter service alone would have ensured that his name was held in honour, among the Romanticists, for the Nibelungenlied captured their imagination more strongly than any other MHG poem. Their knowledge of Bodmer's work as ~~it~~ seems to have come indirectly through C. H. Myller's edition. At the time when this was published in 1783, the Swiss historian Johannes Müller was living in Cassel, where he made the acquaintance of General von Schlieffen, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Myller. Together they studied his edition of the Nibelungenlied, and Müller was fired with zeal to spread the news of it. In 1783 he wrote an article for the Goëttingsche Anzeigen von Gelehrten Sachen, in which he indicated for the first time the origins of the Nibelungen story in fifth century German history, and re-emphasized Bodmer's opinion as to the likeness between the MHG epic and Homeric poetry.⁽¹⁾ These points, which were repeated in the Geschichte Schweizerischer Eidgenossenschaft of 1786, were seized upon by A. W. Schlegel and were developed at length by him and by his successors.⁽²⁾

(1) 36tes Stuck, (3 Mar 1783) pp. 353 sqq.

(2) Der Geschichten Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Zweyter Theil, Neue und vermehrte Auflage, Leipzig, 1806. pp.136 sqq.

Those who were now inspired to study the poem in Myller's edition, discovered from it, if they did not know before, that they owed the preservation of the text to Bodmer. Moreover, those who sought out copies of Criemhilden Rache und die Klage, which Müller mentioned, found out the origin of the comparison of the Nibelungenlied with Homer. However, not all of them can have realized the extent to which that comparison was pursued, since the Frey^muthige Nachrichten, in which most of the work was done, were not so widely known.

The recognition by the Romanticists of the value of Bodmer's MHG studies is important in itself; but it assumes an even greater importance, when one realizes the extent to which it determined their whole conception of the man and his work. Though Bodmer's literary theories were generally regarded as outworn, and though his poems and dramas were left unread, his work on MHG literature stood as a proof that he was after all by no means deficient in feeling for true poetry. The full significance of this fact was defined with unerring insight by Wilhelm Grimm, who said in 1812 :

"Als Dichter hat Bodmer der ursprünglichen Quelle, der ewig jugendlichen schaffenden Kraft ermangelt, darum ist er als solcher vergessen und nur für seine Zeit dagewesen; dagegen ist ihm sein Talent zur Poesie gewiss nicht abzustreiten, seine Gedichte mögen auf alle Art von selbstgebildeten Theorien und Ansichten erzeugt, grau und langweilig sein, ein gewisser Grund und Verstand ist aber sichtbar, und sie sind niemals fad. Was ihm aber in unsern Augen vorzüglichen Werth giebt, ^{das ist sein Gefühl für das ursprüngliche} ein gutes Gedicht ^{der} seiner Zeit zu erkennen ist leicht, aber schwer, ein Poesie

ihr ganz entfremdetes, und hier erscheint sein Verdienst für die altddeutsche Litteratur in hellem Licht; dass er die Gedichte durch Abdruck mittheilen konnte, dafür müssen wir glücklichen Umständen Dank wissen, aber sein Eifer dafür, seine Kenntniss ihres Werths, die ihm von niemandem mitgetheilt, ehrt ihn unabhängig davon. (1)

(1) W. Grimm, Kleinere Schriften, ed. G. Hinrichs, 1ster Band, Berlin, 1881.

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